

PLAY



The UK's bestselling independent magazine

ISSUE NO **207**
TAKING ON THE BATTLEFIELD

exposed

UNCHARTED 3

Co-op? 3D? Free multiplayer?
All the secrets from Naughty Dog

revealed

ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES

It exists, we've seen it, now
see exactly how it plays

first look

FAR CRY 3

Why it'll push PlayStation 3
harder than ever before



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feature

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fighting talk

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Rocksteady tell us why they "don't
have to blow everything up"

review

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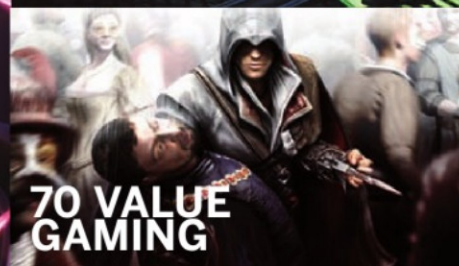
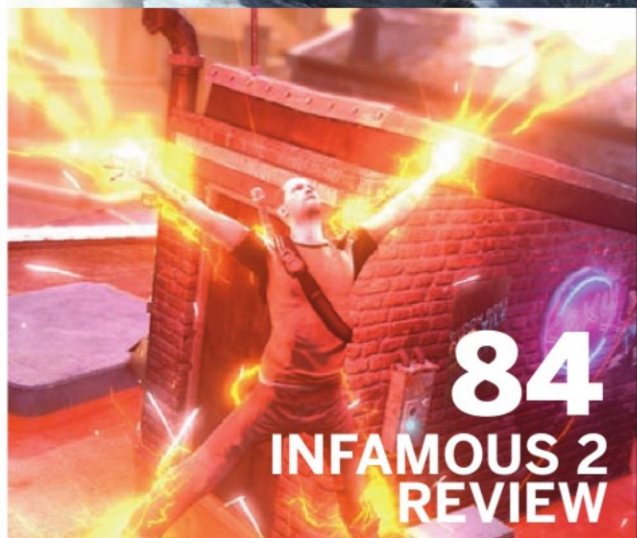
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The UK's best independent PlayStation magazine



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The long wait



Good things come to those who wait. I can't remember where that saying came from, it might have been a beer

advert, but waiting is no guarantee of excellence. Case in point, our *Duke Nukem Forever* review. Ouch. Hopefully the DLC won't take 14 years to arrive.

Even so, you'll have noticed all the previews we've got crammed into this issue, as we round up the games you're patiently waiting for. Some of them will be good – *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception* and *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* are pretty much dead certs at this point. Others, such as *Soul Calibur V* and *Far Cry 3*? Read the previews to find out. It's not all sunshine and roses. Just because you happen to be waiting, we're not going to tell you that they will be amazing games.

It's been a challenge just to get everything in this issue and not just because post-E3 jet lag has taken forever to shake off. We've been talking to the guys behind *Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3*, *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, EA Sports, *Hitman: Absolution*, *Mass Effect 3*, *Batman: Arkham City*, *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City*, *Dead Rising 2: Off The Record* and *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception*. We've been talking a lot. It's all in these very pages.

Good things come to those who wait? Only for those who've been waiting a month to read another issue of *Play*. Enjoy the issue.

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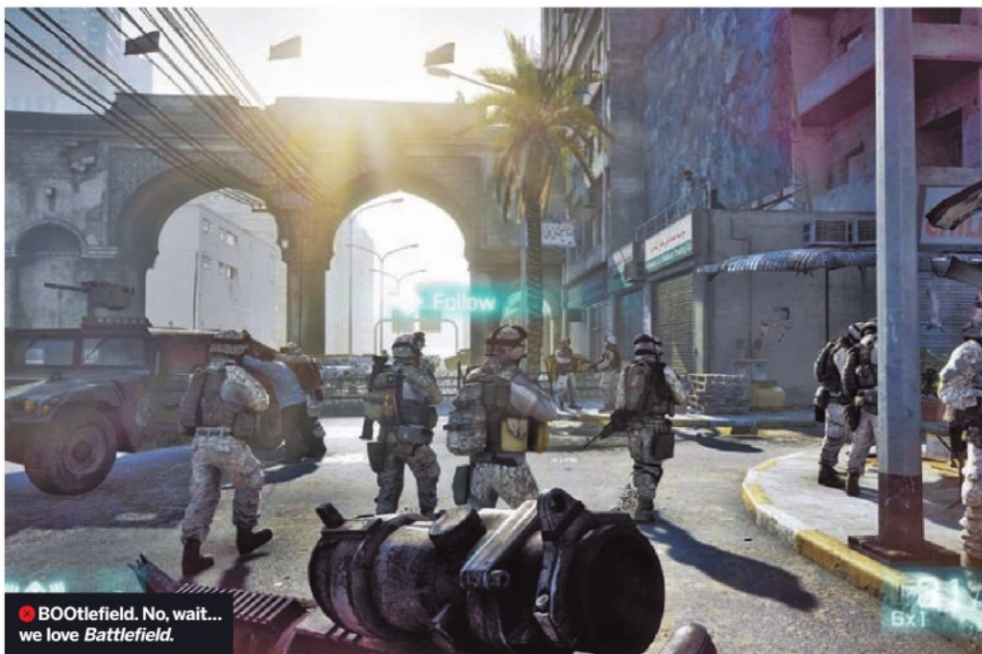
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Stop showing off

I am sure that, as PlayStation 3 users, we are all pretty psyched about the release of *Battlefield 3* this November. Whether you are a *Battlefield* veteran like myself, and look forward to its total domination over *Modern Warfare 3*, both in terms of sales and gameplay, or you are just excited about what it could mean, given the PS3's beastly processing power, for the FPS market as a whole, you cannot deny that it is going to be huge.

Of course, I have just pre-ordered it... on PC. Yes, that's right, your eyes do not deceive you, unassuming reader. Admittedly this was quite

a painful decision even for me, as a loyal PlayStation 3 fanboy who has cherished and loved all three PlayStation generations.

Essentially, I am writing to **Play** to make clear the injustices thrust upon us by DICE as console players. We cannot escape the fact that the PC version is the 'main' one, and thus will naturally be a better game.

The console editions of *Battlefield 3* will be by no means awful, but certainly inferior to the PC's. Effects, lighting, models, textures and the potential of the revamped Frostbite engine are being neutered as we speak. Dedicated servers. 64-player online matches. The list, my friends, goes on and on.

And we must not forget that the console version is more expensive. I, and I'm sure many others share my predicament, feel thoroughly shortchanged, particularly because the previous instalment in the *Battlefield* franchise did not have such an imbalance in the PC and console versions.

However, being hopelessly addicted to *Bad Company 2*, I am still prepared to betray my loyalties, and fork out for a new PC, just so I can play the game 'properly'. So, I urge you, when November comes, stand fast in your allegiances, or perhaps just don't buy it as an act of protest; I myself will be curled up in the foetal position in front of my dangerously overclocked PC, malnourished, waiting for my 294th consecutive game of *Rush* to load.

Yours faithfully,

Jack Rowntree, email

HOW DARE YOU? How could you write to us, a PlayStation magazine, and laugh in our faces as you tell us you're going to get a badass PC to play the definitive version of one of the best-looking games we've seen in a while? We mean, you're absolutely right in pretty much everything you say, but... how DARE you? We'd probably be less annoyed with your cheek and the audacity of this whole escapade, but we're finding ourselves overwhelmed with jealousy at the fact we really want an amazing PC. Damn your eyes, Rowntree.

First the best, second the worst...

I have noticed a slightly worrying trend starting with games released this year. That

trend I speak of is sequels being inferior to their predecessors. *Killzone 3*, *Crysis 2*, *MotorStorm: Apocalypse*, *SOCOM 4* and *Test Drive Unlimited 2* are the most obvious examples that spring to mind but there are others, too.

I don't know what's going on but with most of them it just seems like the devs have forgotten what made the originals so good and have tried to fix things that weren't broken in the first place! I really hope this trend does not continue as there are still some sequels coming up this year that I'm sure we're all looking forward to.

inFamous 2, *Battlefield 3* and *Uncharted 3* being my most anticipated games of the coming year, and god forbid *Uncharted 3* be anything but pure awesome. Oh and *Resistance 3* as well, but as most die-hard fans of the series will agree *Resistance 2* was their step backwards, hopefully the third will get them firmly back in the right direction. From what little I've seen so far of the aforementioned games, all looks well, fingers crossed, eh?

Steven Higgins, email

We didn't think of this curse of the third until you brought it up. We were far too busy enjoying these third games in the series that were actually quite good – just not as good as we had hoped they would be. Frankly, there's no chance in hell that *Uncharted 3* will be anything other than stellar – we'll bet a whole Ryan King on that. Though we're still waiting to be convinced by *Resistance 3*.



Some sequels are awful, *LBP 2* wasn't.



THE BURNING ISSUES

The stuff we want to hear about!

- 1 PSVita. Do you want one? At what price? Is the name stupid?**
- 2 What's the most disappointing game you've bought?**
- 3 How good PC games are. Look how angry is made us!**



Write in, and win! Every full-length letter we print receives a free game, courtesy of Ubisoft. For each letter we included this month the sender wins a download code for *Beyond Good & Evil*, available now for PSN (£7.99). Get it. It's amazingly good

STAR LETTER Suicidal PlayStations...

I haven't been very well recently... had a bad stomach bug, but I'm not writing about that. What I'm writing about is that the PS3 needs more love. Some gaming companies are just being strangely rude by making games that just are a bit... stupid! I saw *Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure* in issue 203 and was interested, I loved the first *Spyros*! But I found out when looking up the trailer that it was some sort of a plug in PlayStation toy-to-game set!? Who would buy this? This can't be serious? If stupid games like this are put inside a PlayStation they will be so depressed and unloved they will commit suicide. PLAYSTATIONS NEED LOVE!

George Thorne, email

● Give it some love, or apparently it will kill itself.



You're getting star letter for one very good reason: the fact you're clearly slightly unhinged, believing as you do the PS3 has the capability to experience feelings,

become sad and be pushed into considering suicide. That's something we've never thought of, and it's something we're very happy to steal as if it was our own idea. We'll get away with it too, so long as we don't publicly admit to having nabbed the concept. Oh, wait... Oh, and as for the stomach bug: too much information.

A-ha!

I am a 28-year-old child that, somehow, has found himself in possession of all the benefits and responsibility that full-time employment brings. In my journey through life I often tend to irresponsibly utilise these benefits to help me ignore as many of the responsibilities as possible.

This may well be the root cause of the situation I currently find myself in, bewildered like Tom Hank's character in the motion picture *Big*. Like many other man-children I was recently cock-a-hoop with excitement at the prospect of Valve's latest work, *Portal 2*.

I was so uncontrollably excited about it that not only did I go out and buy the game on the weekend of release, but I also bought a shiny new 160GB PlayStation 3 console to play it on. The prospect of playing co-operatively with my housemate using Steam was the 'deal-breaker' when making this not insignificant purchase.

As I'm sure you've already realised my plans were scuppered by the fall of the mighty colossus that is the PlayStation Network. With the solo campaign firmly under my belt my new console is now about as much use as a brassiere to a conga eel. Thankfully Sony have nobly offered to bestow gifts on their affected customers in their time of woe. I for one am willing to forgive and forget, though the cruel irony of having to wait until the network is restored to receive these offerings is not lost on me, I assure you.

At this point you may be asking yourself, "That's all well and good man, but what does this have to do with me?" or similar. To which I would like to quote the inimitable raconteur Alan Partridge by way of reply: "...right now I need two positives: one to cancel out the negative and one just so I've got a positive". I look forward to your reply.

John Rogers, email

We have little to no idea what you're blathering on about, John, but we liked your reference to Alan Partridge. As such: we're going to allow this. Unsurprisingly, the PlayStation Network outage dominated the letters we received this month, but surely the worst of it has to be this – being prevented from playing *Portal 2* in co-op. A horrifying world we never want to return to.



● It's not going to be rubbish. Clearly.

PLAY

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INSTALL

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@DuvalMagic

"I'm super excited about NGP, but I have to say that Vita sounds like a hippie drink I would buy at a quack shop"

@PlayMag_UK says: Gearbox

chief Randy Pitchford will probably get used to it like the rest of us.



MGS remake teased

In explaining the absence of *Metal Gear Solid* on the recently announced HD collection, Kojima Productions has hinted that it would like to do a proper remake of the classic PSone game. The MGS HD collection will feature *Sons Of Liberty*, *Snake Eater* and *Peace Walker*, but not the first game.



Everybody's Golf gets Move

One of the smaller announcements from E3 was that Play's favourite golf game *Everybody's Golf: World Tour* will be receiving a belated PlayStation Move update. The game was released way back in 2008, long before Move was even announced. If it means the game becomes easier to find that's fine by us.



BG&E 2 not for PS3

After being announced at Ubidays in 2008 we had expected *Beyond Good & Evil 2* to arrive on this generation of consoles, but according to the game's creator, Michel Ancel, that's not going to happen. It is apparently well into development, but is being planned for the next generation of consoles.

10 PS3 secrets you didn't know

A selection of the exclusive revelations developers whispered in Play's ear

1 Modern Warfare 3 multiplayer is already 'up and running'

"It's up and running. We play it every night but multiplayer is that thing that at this point in development, it's changing every day. We're constantly putting something in, trying it out, taking it out, reshuffling things for balance... it's changing every day." – Robert Bowling, Infinity Ward

2 PlayStation4 will be 'social experience'

"I expect it to be more of a social experience, it'll be a machine that will let you connect to all things, it will be like the centre of the house, so you can watch TV, listen to music, see pictures... I don't know. I think the social experience will be very, very important." – Christophe Balestra, Naughty Dog

3 FIFA is up against Battlefield, not PES

"The world is a little bit different for us now. As little as five years ago, the challenge for FIFA was *Pro Evo*. I think the world we live in now, the challenge for FIFA is *Battlefield 3*. The challenge for FIFA is *Need For Speed*. The challenge for FIFA is *Call Of Duty*. We're talking about global blockbuster properties that the world plays." – Andrew Wilson, EA

4 Dead Rising 2: Off The Record is not a cash-in...

"We knew that we would have a little bit of explaining to do. But I think after *Captivate*, the message that we had there that Frank West was back, there was a story focused around him, the missions would be modified... and now being able to show the new environment and the price, people should have a much better idea of what the product is." – Jason Leigh, Capcom

5 ...and Batman is not Call Of Duty

"We're very much a gameplay studio. We're not *Call Of Duty* spectacle. The fun is in what you're doing with your hands in terms of playing the game, story and the interaction of those key characters... so I'm really happy that people embraced that, because I

think it showed that there is room for those different types of games." – Sefton Hill, Rocksteady

6 Street Fighter X Tekken to become franchise

"Whenever you have another IP involved, another company, it gets a lot trickier. Obviously between *Marvel 2* and *Marvel 3*, we had about ten years before that got solved again! But we're definitely thinking of it that way. We definitely have long-term plans. It won't be a one-off throwaway... we're in it for the long haul, hopefully." – Seth Killian, Capcom

7 Ridley Scott has been involved with Aliens: Colonial Marines

"Originally, Brian Martel [Gearbox co-founder] had met with Ridley Scott himself and went through the storyboards. Ridley Scott imparted his knowledge to Gearbox on what he believes the *Alien* franchise to be. We also met with ADI who did all the special effects for all the *Alien* films." – Brian Cozzens, Gearbox

8 Tomb Raider will still feel like Tomb Raider

"Our core goal was that we still inherited the foundation of what it is to be *Tomb Raider*, but we just presented it in a different fashion. When you get halfway through the game you'll basically sit back and say, 'Bam, that's Lara Croft, that's tomb raiding!'" – Karl Stewart, Crystal Dynamics

9 Agent 47 can read people's minds

"Agent 47 is a genetically modified assassin, as he is created to be the best at what he does. Instinct shows his prowess as an assassin. 47 can use it to see opportunities, plan moves better and identify threats. There's more, lots of other moves, but I can't talk about these yet." – Hakan Abrak, IO Interactive

10 Final Fantasy XIII-2 has not delayed FF Versus XIII

"Both games are the same mythology, but they are two separate projects, so there's no real overlap. *FFXIII Versus* is still on track and isn't delayed by *FFXIII-2*" – Yoshinori Kitase, Square Enix

INSTALL

YOUR SHOUT BATTLEFIELD 3

1. **@PROTAG22** It looks nice and everything, but so far nothing new has been shown gameplay wise. *MW3's* E3 demo was way more exciting, imo.
2. **@CALREDDO** It looks very good. Been marketed very well and will get a lot of sales.
3. **@ANDY_JAMES_TC** Slightly concerned that nobody has even seen a console build of the game, but still my game of show.
4. **@DAYTRIPPER80** It's looking like the game to finally make me like first-person shooters #bf3
5. **@CONORRRRRRRRR** It looks like the equivalent of carrot cake from the cake world in games. Carrot cake is the best-looking and best overall cake.
6. **@EPIC_LEPRECHAUN** #battlefield3 looks absolutely beautiful, and I love the destruction mechanics, but the MP will struggle to topple *COD* or *Brink*.

twitterwatch

What about other upcoming games? Excited about *Deus Ex*? Barmy about *Batman*? Join in the conversation on Twitter over at **@PlayMag_UK** and you could star on this page next month!

REASONS WHY... Prey 2's 'Alien Noir' could work

RUN FOR THE HILLS Parkour finally seems to be having an impact, which is strange when you consider how old *Assassin's Creed* and *Mirror's Edge* are now. Anyway, Killian has some slick moves and you'll need them all to catch those slippery aliens. Think *Brink*.

AN OPEN TOWN The locations you visit are open to exploration and invite investigation. You'll be looking for bounties and can run and vault all over the environment. It's as much about what's above you as what's around you.

GO-GO-GADGETS Our hero Killian is well equipped for his bounty-hunting duties with scanners that show him the location of his target as well as other tools that create anti-gravity pockets or let you float safely to the ground from up high. He has an answer to every problem.

MORE THAN A SEQUEL The original *Prey* was an innovative FPS in the *Doom* or *Quake* mould, but didn't necessarily have enough to warrant a direct sequel. *Prey 2* is moving away from standard FPS gameplay mechanics for something more action-adventure based.

BAD TO THE BONE Taking on your bounties could see you on the wrong side of the law. Much like other sandbox games if you break the law too often or piss off too many people the local law enforcement will come down on you like a ton of bricks.

STAT ATTACK
£267 million
profit made by
PlayStation in the
last year

FIFA still pressured by PES

EA says it's won the battle against Pro Evo, but it's still at war

Despite dominating the sales charts and the reviews scores, the *FIFA 12* dev team isn't giving up yet and still feels *PES* on its tail. Speaking to **Play**, the team revealed how their own love of *PES* helped push them forward and how it now continues to influence how hard they work to improve *FIFA* each year.

"On the older generation of consoles *PES* was an amazing game," gameplay producer Aaron McHardy said. "I was a huge *PES* fan and I think we clearly set our sights on them, rebuilt the engine working through *FIFA 08* to *09* and *10* and they were really pushing us."

Line producer David Rutter added that he thought the *FIFA* brand alone would have kept

the series strong, but that he and his team wanted more. "We took the decision to take the fight into the world of gameplay and we won," he told us. "That's not to say that we aren't going to bother any more. With a 75 per cent market share we're still looking at some of the most significant, expensive and difficult changes to an incredibly successful videogame that have ever happened."

And for McHardy that's because he knows Konami is desperate to catch up: "We don't want to become stagnant, because we know the guys at Konami are working hard to make the best game they can. We need to push the boundaries to make sure we stay on top."



WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

What's the PSN missing? Well, these few things at least



1 Live convention broadcasts: No live broadcast from E3? Sure, we should all have been in bed while Sony was up on stage in LA, but, even so, with such an important event you would think it would want the faithful tuning in and what better way than a live stream on the XMB?



2 PayPal support: Xbox Live Arcade got PayPal support a few weeks back and it got us wondering, 'would that be good for PSN?' The answer was a clear yes. We couldn't swear it was more secure than a credit card, but it's a well-established service.

3 Dynamic Theme creator: We wanted a Jon Gordon theme, but since we know Sony won't make it for us why not allow us to make it for ourselves? Play, Create, Share and all that, right? This would be pretty cool.

4 Twisted Metal beta: Even after E3 and everything we've seen of David Jaffe's new *Twisted Metal* we still feel like we need to play it out in the open with you guys. A beta test has to be the answer.

5 Better PS Plus stuff: We all had PlayStation Plus for free for a whole month and we're still not convinced it's actually worth paying for. Something needs to be done to make it worth splashing cash on each month.



WWWS news:



Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition is costing mega bucks. So says Capcom and it should know since it's the one making it. How many bucks? It's got a bigger budget than any other Capcom digital title released to date.



Shadows Of The Damned

Legendary composer and producer of *Silent Hill*, Akira Yamaoka, talks to Play about *Shadows Of The Damned* and the future of music in games



How often did you, Goichi Suda and Shinji Mikami sit down and talk about *Shadows Of The Damned*?

From the outset we knew that all three of us would be extremely busy,

so we had certain amounts of time fixed so we could sit together and have a discussion – or an argument – about the project.

You've been at the top of the industry for a long time, so what do you think has been the biggest advance in audio in those years?

I think the introduction of the PlayStation was the biggest jump the game industry has seen in terms of sound. The reason being that the additional memory with PSone allowed sound directors to use things like sampling, which couldn't be done before. With sampling and other new types of sound you can express more emotion. From there the sound director started playing a bigger role

as the memory got bigger and we had more things that we could do.

The introduction of the PSone was the biggest jump the game industry has seen in terms of sound

How would you characterise how they work? What do you feel you each brought to the game?

All three of us had completely different missions for *Shadows Of The Damned*. Suda51 as you probably know is really good at creating scenarios and stories. Mikami as you also know has been in the field as a director and he's very good at making great shooters. He was all about the game design side of the project. And my mission was to create the emotion with my music and with the sound effects. That all combined together and worked really well.

The PSone had CDs and that helped the leap forward and now we have Blu-ray. Could it help towards another audio revolution?

The Blu-ray doesn't really change much. The PSone was quite revolutionary, but by comparison the introduction of Blu-ray doesn't make much of a difference.

What Blu-ray does allow is more visually impressive games. Does the new levels of realism in games mean music is less important?

As you say visuals are much more advanced now. Games are more realistic and there's even more action, but I

would compare it now to music in films. The biggest difference, though, is that games are obviously interactive and that makes music for games much more challenging and important.

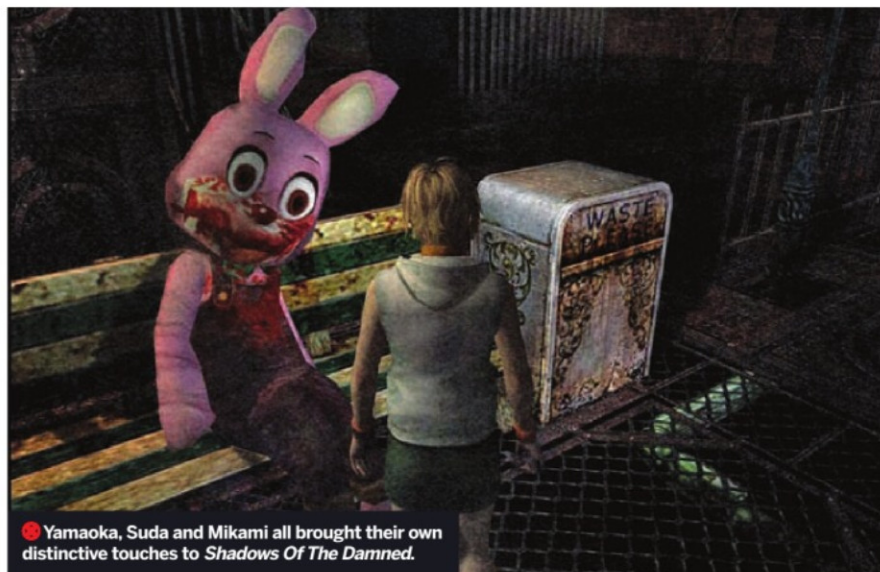
Where do you feel the next leap forward for music will be for games?

I think the smartphone as a game platform is already playing quite a big role in the industry and I think that will increase at speed. More and more games will be made for smartphones and so from a composer's point of view there are limited things you can do with such a small platform but that barrier will

disappear. I don't know what I can do yet, but the smartphone could play a very important part and could be another revolution like I experienced with PSone.

Would you be interested in working on a game that is only about music like *Rez* and *Child Of Eden*?

My ideal game is not where the gameplay or the music are at the front, but where they are on the same level. Where they have the same importance. So, I'm not really interested in making a music-orientated game. I want to keep on searching what music can do for games more broadly.



INSTANT EXPERT

All of the pros with none of the prose

VEHICLE FRIENDLY

The Frostbite engine should be vehicle friendly. *Battlefield* uses all sorts of cars and planes and DICE actually has a background in rally and NASCAR titles.

COLD HEARTED

In an interesting move *Need For Speed: The Run* will be using DICE's Frostbite 2.0 engine. That's the same engine that *Battlefield 3* will be using and which has yet to be used in any kind of racing game.

SELF-DESTRUCT

Destruction is a unique selling point of the *Battlefield* series these days and of the Frostbite engine, so we could well see some in *The Run*.

2,500 MILES

The Run is about a huge race from San Francisco to New York. With an unsavoury bunch behind the wheels your main concern won't be getting to New York first, but surviving.

PIT STOPS

The *Need For Speed: The Run* reveal trailer hinted at stops in Las Vegas and Denver as you make your way through the likes of Utah and Pennsylvania on your way to New York.

NEED FOR SPEED: THE RUN

Developer EA Black Box
Publisher EA • ETA 15 Nov

AUTOPILOT

Autolog is now considered to be a staple of the series after its introduction in *Hot Pursuit* so it will be making a return with *The Run*.

BACK IN THE BOX

Black Box is back behind the wheel of *Need For Speed* with *The Run*. It also worked on the PC-only *NFS: World* last year, but its last PS3 racer was *Undercover*. All that said the 350 strong staff has had two years to develop *The Run*.

THE PURSUIT

With Slightly Mad Studios concentrating on the simulation side of this series it would appear that Criterion and Black Box will now be alternating development each year.

twitterwatch



@HIDEO_KOJIMA_EN
"The tank battle image from 'BATTLEFIELD 3' is brilliant! It is the best I have ever seen in the last five years. 'DICE' is great"
@PlayMag_UK says: MGS creator Hideo Kojima gives his blessing to *Battlefield 3*. Wait until he finds out there aren't any cutscenes.

DOS & DON'TS

Important lessons from Play this month



DO: Create your own missions and share them in *inFamous 2*. It's the new Play, Create, Share playground.



DON'T: Get too sucked in by *Shadows Of The Damned* or else you may lose your mind and become a gibbering wreck.



DO: Try to smash up as much stuff as possible when playing *Red Faction: Armageddon*. Leave no structure standing.



DON'T: Try to compare *Earth Defence Force* to other PS3 titles. It may not look as good, but it's all in the stupid gameplay.

Read our reviews of all these games starting on page 81

PLAYSTATION Charts

Cataloguing everything that's big in the world of PlayStation

PS3 CHART

	1	LA Noire Rockstar It's still holding strong at the top of the charts after a round of excellent reviews. 91%
	2	inFamous 2 Sony Sony's first big post-PSN crisis exclusive, but it's showing no ill-effects among fans. 83%
	3	Call Of Duty: Black Ops Activision A slight drop this month, but <i>Black Ops</i> is sticking around, presumably with <i>MW3</i> fever gathering. 94%
	4	FIFA 11 EA <i>FIFA 11</i> is still kicking around, but as the new edition draws closer we imagine it will begin to fall. 91%
	5	Duke Nukem Forever 2K Games All its years in development didn't do much for Duke's return. However, fans still flocked. 33%
	6	Red Faction: Armageddon THQ A solid opening entry into our chart for the latest Mars-smashing epic from Volition. 62%
	7	F.E.A.R. 3 Warner Bros. The tale of Alma, Point Man and Paxton Fettel shows no signs of losing its intrigue. NA%
	8	DiRT 3 Codemasters Good to see <i>DiRT 3</i> holding firm despite the new releases. Deserves its acclaim and sales. 85%
	9	Dungeon Siege III Square Enix There's still plenty of love for time-sink RPGs, as <i>Dungeon Siege III</i> clearly proves. 80%
	10	Shadows Of The Damned EA With a strong dev team, <i>SOTD</i> was unlikely to arrive without getting noticed. 79%

PSP CHART

	1	FIFA 11 EA Still no budging <i>FIFA</i> from top spot as the British public refuses to let go of the season that's passed. 69%
	2	Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean Activision A little switch around for the Lego games with the excitement of a new movie pushing <i>Pirates</i> up. 76%
	3	Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars Activision Star Wars is forced to make way for Jack Sparrow. NA%
	4	Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy Square Enix Another slight decline for <i>Dissidia</i> , but the <i>FF</i> massive keep it going for a short while more. 79%
	5	WWE All Stars THQ People still seem to be loving <i>WWE</i> on the go. We're hearing good things about the next instalment, too. NA%

*This chart is compiled from sales, our opinions and the games you're playing. If you're playing a recent, quality title that isn't on our chart, head on over to the forum and let us know about it.

INSTALL

5 UNCONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

Bang. Boom. Pop. Kapow. Guns are so boring these days. There's only so many times you can fire an M16 before the experience grows dull. We want something different from our games... something like...



4 FOAM FINGER

Beat *Dead Space 2* on hardcore mode and you get the Hand Cannon – a foam finger that can blast Necromorphs apart in a single shot. Isaac will say “bang!” with every primary shot fired, and “pew!” with every secondary shot. Even foam fingers are amazing in the future. Technology, eh?

5 GRAVITY GUN

We love you, Valve. Like seriously love you. We would marry you if a person could marry a company. We're standing outside your window, Valve. *Watching you.* It's because you come up with ideas like *Half-Life 2*'s Gravity Gun – a weapon that's also a puzzle-solving tool. Utter brilliance. While we're at it, why haven't you responded to any of our letters? We write you every day.



2 HULA HOOP

We're told that Tira's weapon in *SoulCalibur* is a 'Ring Blade', but let's be honest, it's just a hula hoop with a very sharp edge. We can't blame Tira for using it as a weapon, though – she gets to have fun *and* fight at the same time! Just like we did when we created Knife Twister.

3 SHOWER HEAD

Have you ever stood in the shower, watched the cascading water and imagined that it was blood? No? Ahem... us neither. Someone at Capcom clearly did, though, introducing the shower head as one of *Dead Rising*'s many weird and wonderful weapons. There's something very satisfying about sticking one in a zombies' skull and watching their brains spill out onto the floor.



1 THE OSTRICH HAMMER

It was *Red Faction: Guerrilla* that allowed us to live out our lifelong ambition of smashing an ostrich against a building. We'd dreamt of being able to do so for many, many years, ever since we visited a zoo in our childhood and one of the blighters bit our hand. We thought our vendetta against the ostrich would never be sated. Volition ensured that it was.

TEAM PICKS

We pick our favourite unconventional weapons in gaming



CHRIS

RUBBER BALL

I was always partial to the rubber band ball in *Bully*. It can be a devastating weapon in real life, too, as Ian found out when I chucked one at his head recently.



JON

PADDLE SAW

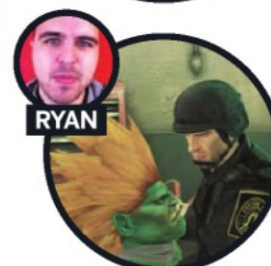
Dead Rising 2's weapon-making feature was something I was really looking forward to. Sadly the game couldn't keep up with my twisted mind, but the Paddle Saw still rocked.



IAN

TASER

Tasers aren't exactly unconventional, but Gabe Logan's use of them in *Syphon Filter* is. They're meant to be non-lethal, not 'set them on fire hilariously (definitely lethal)'.



RYAN

ROARING THUNDER

Roaring Thunder in *Dead Rising 2* because it's a Blanka mask with real electricity. And that's it. That's all the explanation you need.

The anatomy of...

GLaDOS

Easily one of the most memorable characters in the current generation of gaming – and definitely one of the funniest – GLaDOS is a unique antagonist that stands out among the Bowsers and Dragovich's of the gaming world. Let's take a closer look

There's one thing we haven't mentioned about GLaDOS, and it has something to do with potatoes. We don't want to ruin the surprise if you haven't played *Portal 2*, though, so instead you'll just have to stare at this potato and imagine whatever it could be.



THE STORY

In the fiction of the *Half-Life* universe construction of GLaDOS – or the Genetic Lifeform and Disk Operating System – began in 1986, with the aim of accelerating the Portal project and putting Aperture Science in a better position to compete effectively with Black Mesa. GLaDOS was activated in May 2003. Within one picosecond she became self-aware, and two picoseconds later she locked down the entire facility and began a permanent testing cycle. The various scientists rebelled, which incited GLaDOS to flood the Aperture Enrichment Centre with a deadly neurotoxin. Survivors of this attack fitted her with a Morality Core that dampened her murderous intentions – that is until Chell unwittingly removed it at the end of the first *Portal*.



GOOD LOOKS

Most gamers could recognise GLaDOS from a silhouette, but she went through various iterations before the final design was settled upon. Previously she was a floating brain; a sprawling mechanism; and even a take on Botticelli's *The Birth Of Venus*. Eventually Valve chose the image of a robotic figure hanging from the ceiling, which, from a certain angle, looks like a woman hanging upside down with her arm around her legs. The team; they wanted to give the impression of a woman in bondage – which, if you play *Portal 2*, makes perfect sense...

A RECIPE FOR DISASTER

We all know GLaDOS has a penchant for cake, or at least, the *promise* of cake. But for all the talk of the cake being a lie, it's actually not. Remove GLaDOS's Intelligence Core at the end of *Portal* and it will begin reciting the recipe. Here are some choice ingredients Chell would have been able to 'enjoy' had she ever got her just des(s)erts.

- Alpha resins
- Cranial caps
- Candy-coated peanut butter pieces, shaped like fish
- Fibreglass surface resins
- Deep penetration agents
- Fish-shaped candies
- Fish-shaped dirt
- Fish-shaped ethyl benzene
- Four large eggs
- One can prepared coconut pecan frosting
- One cross borehole electro-magnetic imaging rhubarb
- One cup granulated sugar
- Sediment-shaped sediment
- Two tablespoons rhubarb juice
- Unsaturated polyester resin



THE EMOTION ENGINE

Amoral, sadistic, funny, dry, bitter, sarcastic, dark, morbid, cruel – GLaDOS is a deep and varied character, her passive-aggressive nature and frequent lies about her own feelings making her somewhat childlike despite her barely concealed malevolence. She considers herself the innocent victim, simply trying to do science and persecuted by Chell rather than vice versa. It's difficult not to like her, which is largely thanks to the voice work by Ellen McLain, who has done a number of voices at Valve.



THE REALITY

GLaDOS's true origins can be traced back to 2005's *Psychonauts*, on which *Portal* writer Erik Wolpaw also worked. While using a text-to-speech converter to fill out dialogue, Wolpaw commented, "No amount of writing is funnier than this text-to-speech thing reading it". He vowed to use it in a future project. That project was *Portal*. The team enjoyed the funny and sinister nature of the voice, so GLaDOS eventually became one of the core components of *Portal*.

{The Vault}

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

The toys, trinkets and tailoring that has our fires burning this month



Ryu Anniversary Statue

\$374.95 at Play.com

This is no ordinary statue. Do you really think Capcom would treat this anniversary rendition of Ryu with anything less than the highest possible spectacle? No, this statue actually has a USB plug that allows the resin base to be illuminated. That's pretty cool if you ask us.



Valkyria Chronicles III Nendoroid

\$52.99 at BigBadToyStore.com

Nendoroids are pretty new to us and they're not cheap, but by golly are they cute? This one is of Imuka from *Valkyria Chronicles III*, but there are all sorts available and we think they're among the coolest little Japanese toys going today. We just need to save up for one.



Zakhaev Airport Shirt

£20 at InsertCoinClothing.com

Your target in *Modern Warfare*, Zakhaev, had an airport named after him by the time of the events in *Modern Warfare 2* and then that became the location for one of the most talked and written about game sequences in history. The infamous airport mission, No Russian, is unlikely to be forgotten.

Toluca Lake Hoodie

£30 at InsertCoinClothing.com

We've featured this design once before, although back then it was only a shirt. This is the hoodie version, which makes a lot of sense to us since it's probably quite chilly down by the lake. You would want the extra layer. That's what we think about it anyway.



Portal Companion Cube Plush

\$29.99 each at ThinkGeek.com

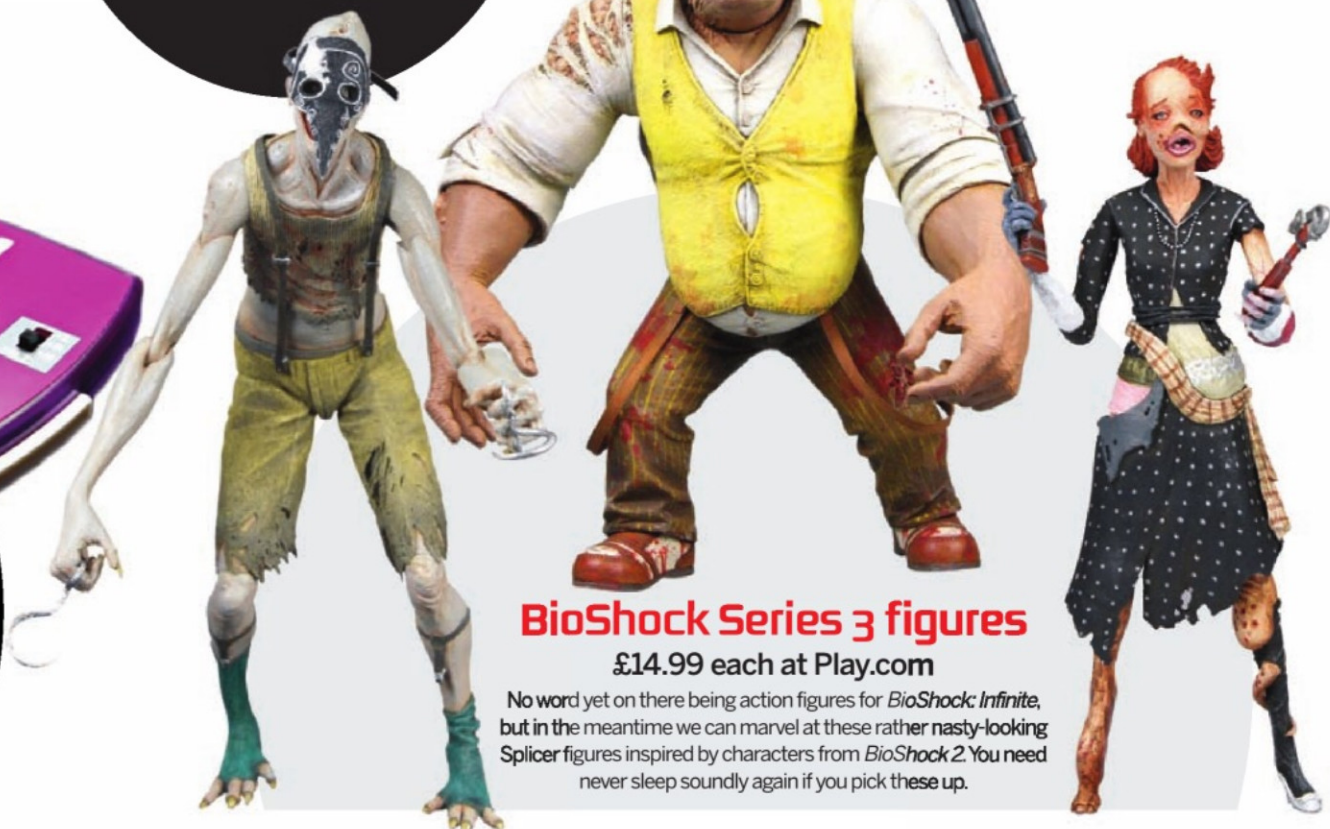
ThinkGeek has been smart in bringing together as much *Portal 2* merchandise on its website as possible. You can find all sorts on there, some of which you may struggle to get on Valve's official store any more. This plush of the Weighted Companion Cube is a good example.



XCM cross battle adaptor 2.0

£70 at scufprocontrollers.com

This little box may not look like much, but it's pretty handy. The reason why is that as much as we love the classic DualShock pad design of the PS3 we don't always have enough pads and our Xbot friends bitch and moan about it. Now they can use this to play PS3 with an Xbox 360 pad. Pretty sweet.



BioShock Series 3 figures

£14.99 each at Play.com

No word yet on there being action figures for *BioShock Infinite*, but in the meantime we can marvel at these rather nasty-looking Splicer figures inspired by characters from *BioShock 2*. You need never sleep soundly again if you pick these up.

Final Fantasy Dissidia Play Arts Kai Figures

£49.99 each at ForbiddenPlanet.co.uk

These figures from Square Enix's increasingly impressive house of toys are the top tier variety. There are no corners cut on these things and you'll be paying top dollar for them. Cloud, Squall Leonhart and Gabranth are all around nine inches tall and very highly detailed.



CONDITIONS: Enter discount code when placing order. MySoti.com discount code only valid on featured items between 7 July and 3 August. Visit MySoti.com for even more great T-Shirts.



TokyoFlash Satellite Watch

£57.35 at TokyoFlash.com

More crazy watch designs from the TokyoFlash house of timekeeping. This one's nice and easy to read, though, with each circle representing a different measure of time to make up the hours and minutes of the day. Very slick and very cool as ever.

Herbie?

£20.88 at MySoti.com

Happy-go-lucky VW Beetle meets transformer and suddenly it goes crazy and starts killing people. We don't know about you, but that's the kind of nightmare scenario that keeps us up at night.

Pixel Kombat

£25.88 at MySoti.com

After the excellent *Street Fighter* homage from a couple of issues back, we knew it wouldn't take long for a *Mortal Kombat* shirt to come along in pixel style. Good to see it, too.

Jak And Daxter Figures

£17.99 each at ForbiddenPlanet.co.uk

For all that we like the fancy and expensive stuff at times on *Play*, we were always told we had wine taste and a beer pocket. As such we still like a bargain and this two pack of Jak and Daxter figures fits the bill rather nicely.



Futurama Tineez

£19.99 at ForbiddenPlanet.com

As *Futurama* collectables go there can be no question that this set of mini-figures is among the very best we've seen. We really liked the Zoidberg plush, but this happy bunch is exactly the kind of thing we'd like smiling at us on our desks.

HIGH FIVE

Gaming posters we'd have on our wall

Uncharted 2 – I Play Dirty (Signed)

£10.29 at Amazon.co.uk

As if this nicely stylised piece of *Uncharted 2* art wasn't enough, the 40 odd signatures from the developers helps make it a little more special. We definitely approve of that kind of fan service.



Killzone 3 – For The Glory

£10.95 at Amazon.co.uk

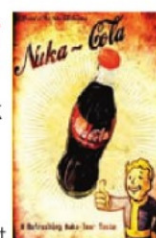
This recruitment-style poster for *Killzone 3* is pretty cool, but also pretty rare, which we guess makes it even better in the long run. Anyway, this kind of concept poster is exactly what we like to see around.



Fallout 3 – Nuka Cola

£11.95 at Amazon.co.uk

This is another rare one, but again you have to love an advertisement for an in-game product. We're actually beginning to see a little more Nuka Cola-branded stuff around these days. There could be more on the way.



Resident Evil 5

£3.99 at PopArtUK.com

There are lots of things to like about this poster. First it's a good depiction of Chris and Sheva. Second, it's nice and minimalist. And lastly there are no infected hordes in it, letting you wonder what's out of sight. Creepy.



Super Street Fighter IV

£3.99 at PopArtUK.com

So many characters and so little space. These kinds of huge character art pieces are fairly rare in the gaming world. Few games have a cast big enough to support such a thing. *Street Fighter* obviously isn't so unlucky and the results speak for themselves.



E3 by the numbers

The facts and figures that shaped this year's conference

Sony Vs Microsoft The battle continues

Sony exclusives 14

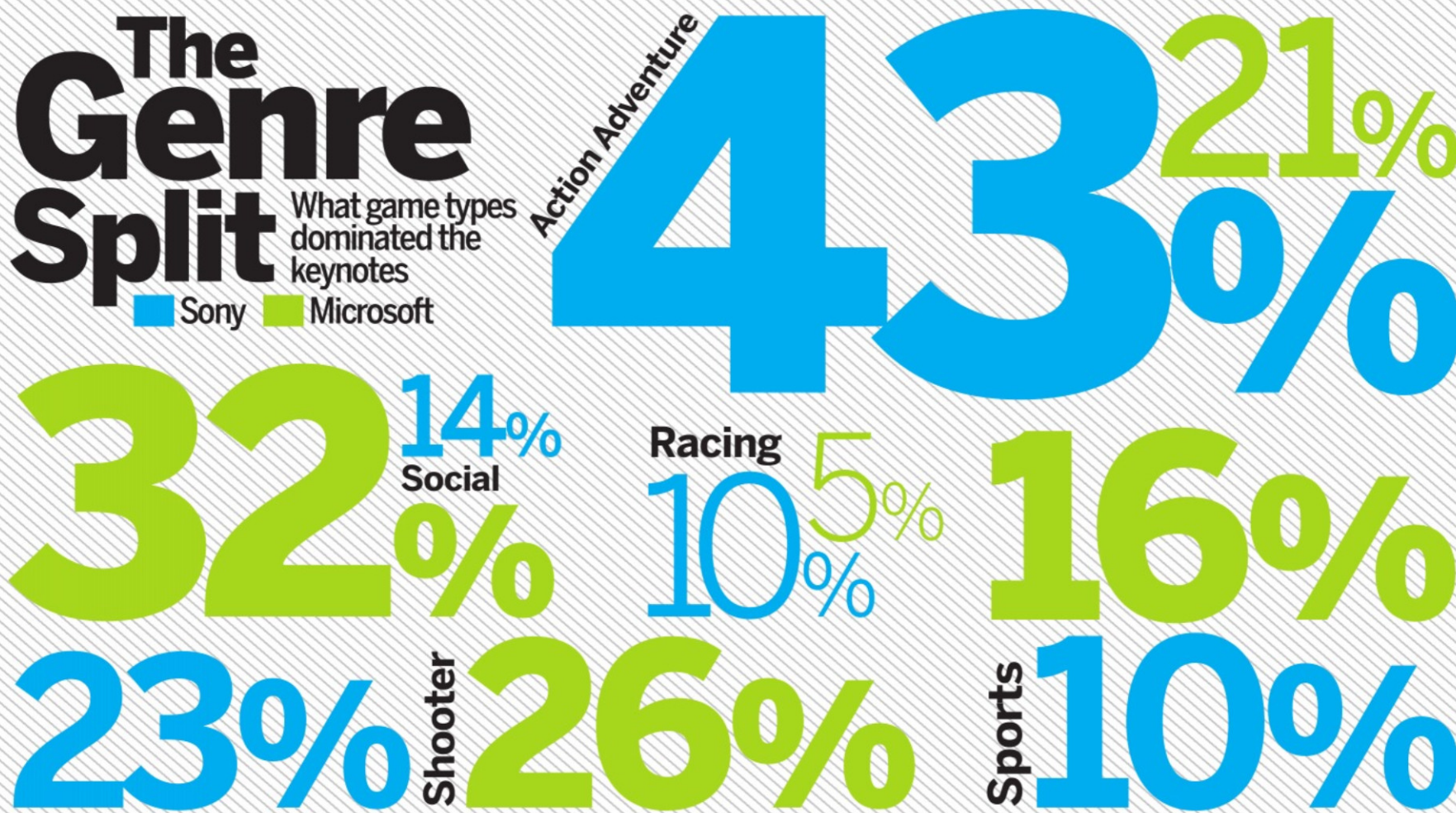
Microsoft exclusives 13

SONY EXCLUSIVES 1. Dust 514, 2. God Of War Origins Collection, 3. Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD, 4. inFamous 2, 5. LittleBigPlanet 2 Move, 6. LittleBigPlanet PS Vita, 7. Medieval Moves: Deadmund's Quest, 8. ModNation Racers PSVita, 9. Resistance 3, 10. Ruin, 11. Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time, 12. Starhawk, 13. Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception, 14. Uncharted: Golden Abyss **MICROSOFT EXCLUSIVES** 1. Dance Central 2, 2. Fable: The Journey, 3. Forza 4, 4. Gears Of War 3, 5. Halo 4, 6. Halo Combat Evolved HD, 7. Kinect Disneyland Adventure, 8. Kinect Fun Labs, 9. Kinect Sports Season Two, 10. Kinect Star Wars, 11. Minecraft, 12. Ryse, 13. Sesame Street: Once Upon a Monster

The Genre Split

What game types dominated the keynotes

■ Sony ■ Microsoft



E3'S BLOCKBUSTER 3S

What do the threequels have in common?

	Uncharted 3	Resistance 3	Battlefield 3	Modern Warfare 3	Saints Row 3	Mass Effect 3	Far Cry 3	Ninja Gaiden III	UFC Undisputed 3	
One man against the world... with friends: Going solo is so 2010 don't you know.	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	MW3 and UFC stand out as the only games here where you switch character. Is that significant?
It's the end of the world as we know it: Because the apocalypse never gets old.	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	Be it alien invasion, global catastrophe or demonic revolution we still love a good humanity killing crisis.
Guns, lots of guns: If you can't shoot it what's it doing in our game?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	Ninja Gaiden III may still wind up with guns, but we've not seen any yet and it's not usually Hayabusa's style.
Let's all go to Blighty (meaning Britain): Because we live in the greatest nation ever!!!	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	Were developers hoping for 2012 Olympic tickets in return for having London in their games?

*If you take guns to mean the enhanced male biceps of most UFC fighters, otherwise 'No'.

Play influencing games

BioShock: Infinite and Asura's Wrath make changes thanks to our influence

As Ken Levine, creative director of Irrational, stood on the stage at Sony's E3 press conference and announced that *BioShock: Infinite* would feature Move support we were shocked. However, it was not the shock of the new control option being used. What took us by surprise was how this decision came about.

"We've been doing a lot of press for *BioShock: Infinite* recently and I did an interview a few months ago and I expressed some scepticism about the concept of motion control," Levine said. "I may have said a few uncharitable things about the Move." What happened next is Sony got in touch and

convinced him Move was worth bringing to *BioShock: Infinite*.

And what interview was he talking about? The one in *Play* 203 in which he said, "You can have Move support on your box, but people are going to know you're cheating them."

Travel ahead to *Play* 205 and the *Asura's Wrath* dev team laughing when we asked if there will be tiny bosses in its game to counteract the planet-sized adversary in the trailers. Then at E3 we were exclusively told, "There is a tiny boss! Not as tiny as you think but there's a boss smaller than Asura."

In other words, *Play* is the single most influential publication on the planet. Fact.



WHAT NEXT? What can you expect from gamescom and TGS



gamescom

Tokyo Game Show

COLOGNE, GERMANY – 17-21 AUGUST It's the biggest games convention in Europe, it's open to the public and Sony is quickly becoming rather fond of it. This is the place Sony has taken to announcing pricing and price drops in the past so if the PS3 is going to trim down the price tag in the run up to Christmas it will happen here. After *Resistance 3* was announced last year at gamescom some kind of teaser trailer announcement could also be likely.

TOKYO, JAPAN – 15-18 SEPTEMBER With *MGS: Rising* and *The Last Guardian* both absent from E3 all eyes turned East (although West would have been closer) in anticipation that both would make an appearance on their native soil. Itagaki's first game since leaving Team Ninja, *Devil's Third*, will also be making its full debut at the event according to its notorious director. And you can be sure that plenty of games will be revealed for PS Vita.

WIN Sony BRAVIA TV and Battle: Los Angeles on Blu-ray

Access the *Resistance 3* demo with new Blu-ray release from Sony Pictures



Thanks to Sony Pictures Home Entertainment we have a Sony BRAVIA LCD TV and five copies of its latest release *Battle: Los Angeles* to give away. What may be of particular interest to all you *Resistance* fans out there is that this Blu-ray comes with a special limited access code to a *Resistance 3* demo. From the producer of *The Fast And The Furious* and *xXx*, *Battle: Los Angeles* pits a US Marine squadron against an invading alien horde. To be in with a chance of winning simply answer the following question:

Who did Battle: Los Angeles star Aaron Eckhart play in The Dark Knight?
a) Batman b) Robin c) Harvey Dent

Battle: Los Angeles is out on Blu-ray and DVD on 11 July, courtesy of Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

www.facebook.com/BattleLA.UK.IRE

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS All entrants must be 18 years old or over. To submit your answer email play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the subject heading 'Battle LA Comp'. The closing date for entries is 3 August 2011. Please be aware that answers must be submitted to the above email address only, and any left through the comments section of our website will be automatically disqualified. This competition is open to residents of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Imagine Publishing has the right to substitute the prize for a similar item of equal or higher value. Employees of Imagine Publishing (including freelancers), their relatives, or any agents are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash. Full terms and conditions are available upon request. From time to time, Imagine Publishing or its agents may send you related material or special offers. If you do not want to receive this, please state it clearly on your competition entry.

Who was missing?

The games that didn't show up and why

God Of War IV

There were plenty of rumours in the run-up to E3 that Sony's San Diego Studio would be attending the event and that it would have Kratos kicking and screaming right behind it. As it turned out *God Of War* did make an appearance at E3, but in the form of an HD collection of *Chains Of Olympus* and *Ghost Of Sparta*, his PSP outings.



Metal Gear Solid: Rising

We had been led to believe for some time that Konami would be showing something new from Raiden's exciting new action game one year on from its reveal last E3, but nothing emerged. With Hideo Kojima seemingly stuck between games and rumours that *Bayonetta* developer Platinum is now involved, perhaps we'll be waiting a while.



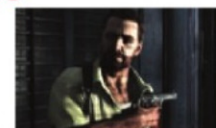
The Last Guardian

This one was a big surprise, but given that Team Ico and Sony have pushed back the release of *The Last Guardian* into 2012, perhaps not a huge one. The interesting thing is that no one seems to have really missed it. We're still keen to get our hands on it, but interest is starting to wane as new tech emerges on the horizon.



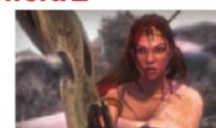
Max Payne 3

With *L.A. Noire* recently released we thought Rockstar would be out in force with *Max Payne 3* at E3. It was the assumed presence of *Max Payne 3* that led many of us to believe that Rockstar would hold off on announcing a new *Grand Theft Auto*. As it turned out neither game made an appearance at E3.



Heavenly Sword 2

Rumours of a follow-up to the PS3's early action-adventure took us a little by surprise, but we would welcome a comeback from Nariko if one is likely to happen. Whether Sony has plans to resurrect *Heavenly Sword* or not we still don't know as E3 didn't give us a single glimmer of its existence.



INSTALL

PLAY



● He may follow the orders of others but Ezio is still a badass.



● We can't imagine Vega blending into the crowd in the same way Ezio does.



● You've got to be a bit of a bastard to join the Dark Brotherhood.

HIRED GUNS

Guns, knives, other stabbing weapons and bombs (among other things) for hire: they're supposed to be bastards, but we can't help but love them. Join us in our praise of assassins - of all creeds

♥ 1. TOO COOL FOR [ASSASSIN] SCHOOL

Turns out that, far from being a horrible profession that only those with a borderline mental illness (or a fully fledged one, let's not beat around the bush here) would be involved in, assassinating is actually the forte of many a witty, sexy and downright cool person. *Hitman's* Agent 47 may be a clone, built in a laboratory and made for nothing but murder with a price tag, but he's still a damn snappy dresser. Ezio of *Assassin's Creed* fame may follow the instructions of others to 'stab that bloke in the chin', but he still has time to sex up the ladies and make snappy comments in the general direction of his enemies. And what about *No More Heroes* and Travis Touchdown, who... well, no. Travis isn't actually cool.

♥ 2. SUBTLETY, OR LACK THEREOF

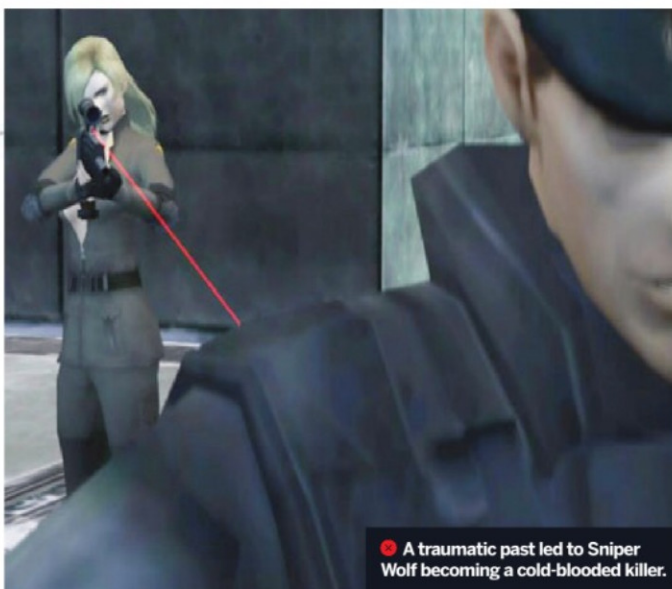
For every assassin capable of being subtle, sneaking up on a target and making them stop being alive in a very quick fashion, it seems videogames want to throw another four dozen idiots who lack even basic tact when killing people for money into the mix. Take *Tekken's* Nina and Anna Williams, who opt for their preferred method of having a one-on-one brawl in a widely publicised tournament in order to take out their targets. Subtle it is most certainly not. Ditto for Vega of *Street Fighter* fame. Then there's the player's own influence, resulting in assassination missions on *Grand Theft Auto* being carried out with a rocket launcher. From the top of a juggernaut. In the middle of rush-hour traffic. With the police watching.

♥ 3. BASTARDRY

When you're in the business of killing people for a few quid it's not exactly surprising that your moral compass might not always be perfectly aligned. It's probably more surprising that so many developers want us to idolise these people who *kill other people for money*. So it's good when you're reminded just what it is you're getting involved in, like how you can only be offered a spot in *Oblivion's* Dark Brotherhood by killing an innocent - that's gittiness of the highest order. And speaking of bastardry, what about an assassin who works by tearing the head from their target's body? We're looking at you, the original Sub-Zero from *Mortal Kombat*. You massive icy twerp. All the same, being bad is often good.



♥ Videogame assassins are often portrayed as an honourable bunch.



♥ A traumatic past led to Sniper Wolf becoming a cold-blooded killer.

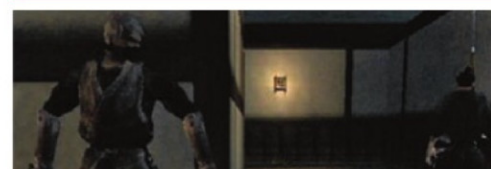
Best



Agent 47



Altair



Rikimaru

BEST & WORST
AT 'CLEANING'



Nina Williams



Anyone from GTA

Worst

♥ 4. HONOUR

Rather than painting the art of assassination as what it is – waiting until a bank transfer clears before removing the bowels of a man you've only ever seen a couple of photos of – a lot of games paint hired killers as paragons of honour and an example we should all follow. For every band of marauding, smacked-up cyborg maniacs in the likes of *Syndicate Wars*, you've got Rikimaru and Ayame from *Tenchu* trying to redress the balance by being all 'good' and stuff (while slicing throats for monetary gain). Even *Mass Effect 2*'s resident badass Thane breaks ranks by revealing himself to be... well, that would be a spoiler. So we won't go there. Safe to say, he's more honourable than he gives himself credit for.

♥ 5. CHEMICAL IMBALANCES

If you're not thinking straight, you might be a bit under the weather. If you've *never* thought straight, you might be a hired killer. Simple assassinomics dictate that being a bit mad probably helps you with the whole 'cutting someone's heart out for a tenner' thing. As such we have to give mad props (PUN) to the likes of *Killer7*'s Harman Smith and his seven other Smith personas – surely the sign of a (few) mind(s) that veered a bit too close to the edge. Then there's *Metal Gear Solid*'s Sniper Wolf – while lucid to the point of seeming normal, she is the kind of woman who had to take up sniping so she could witness battles from outside of the fighting. Classic PTSD, clearly. Maybe. Or not.

CONCLUSION

It turns out that videogame assassins are far better than their real-life equivalents. While in the actual world they tend to be mentally unstable at the very least, absolutely psychopathic at worst, in the world of gaming they are a bunch of colourful, sympathetic characters. So much so that we're still tempted to see if there are any assassination contracts posted at the local Job Centre. Just to, you know, *try our hand* at the whole dirty business. Ahem.

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6 reasons you're wrong about Modern Warfare 3

1 "IT'S GOING TO BE THE GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME"

Let's not get overexcited about *Modern Warfare 3* before we've learned anything concrete about it. It will sell well, but will it be an artistic achievement? Or will it just be an entertaining action game that features fancier explosions than previous? We're thinking that the latter is the more likely.

2 "IT'S GOING TO BE GENERIC/UNORIGINAL/RECYCLED"

You never heard anyone calling *Uncharted 2* unoriginal just because it featured Nathan Drake, cover mechanics and platforming. We've seen two *MW3* levels and although the cover, shoot and advance mechanics are very familiar, the level of action occurring in and around this gameplay is still of an impressively high quality.

3 "IT'S GOING TO BE RUBBISH COMPARED TO BATTLEFIELD 3"

What do we really know about *Battlefield*? What do we really know about *MW3*? At Play we've seen more than most of both these games, and we're still not prepared to make such statements. And who cares anyway? Just enjoy both. Liking one doesn't mean you have to hate the other.

<http://t.co/j9qf3e>

4 "SINGLE-PLAYER IS POINTLESS. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MULTIPLAYER"

If you're not interested in the single-player then fair-dos. But to dismiss the campaign from the off is just the kind of immature behaviour we're all too accustomed to from the gaming public. Just play multiplayer if you want, but know that that doesn't automatically make the single-player an afterthought.

5 "INFINITY WARD IS CRAP AT MULTIPLAYER - IT MESSED UP MODERN WARFARE 2"

Whatever your opinions on *MW2*, and however cheated you felt by a lack of balancing and weapon exploits, hordes of gamers still played that game online for a very long time. Infinity Ward clearly got something right. Let's not forget that it was Infinity Ward who revolutionised FPS gaming in *COD 4*. As such we've got little reason to believe it won't do an excellent job this time around.

6 "IT'S GOING TO BE TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING WE'VE SEEN FROM THIS SERIES BEFORE"

We know we made a case for *MW3* not being unoriginal or recycled, but we didn't say it won't be familiar. This is *Call Of Duty* as you've come to know and love over the past eight years. You're not going to be riding magical dolphins or solving murder mysteries.

6 things you didn't want to kill (but did anyway)



1 CIVILIANS (MW2)

Fear. That's the main reason you killed the civilians in a Russian airport. Yes, we know, controversial blah blah *Daily Mail* blah bloody blah. What happened if you didn't kill the civilians? You didn't know, because you didn't want to risk failing the level to find out.



2 SNIPER WOLF (METAL GEAR SOLID)

She's one of the more sadistic bosses in *Metal Gear Solid*. A triumphant victory after cornering her in a sniper battle across a snowy field and shooting her in the lung turns into something sadder as Sniper Wolf then opens up about her tragic past.



3 COLOSSI (SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS)

You're killing the Colossi because a voice tells you to, which initially paints you as something of a hero, but slowly peels away the mystery surrounding the story to show that you're actually... not very nice.

<http://bit.ly/kzypd>



4 MEGATON (FALLOUT 3)

This one is your fault. How could it not be? You knew how shady Mister Burke was when he approached you with the offer to blow up the nuke. Most of all, you just wanted to know what happens. It's that curiosity that drove you to push the button that turned an entire town to nuclear waste.



5 BIG DADDY (BIOSHOCK)

Choice is the key word for *BioShock*. It's not only choice on whether you harvest or save Little Sisters but also on whether you kill their guardians, Big Daddy. You can completely ignore them if you want... except there are at least three you have to kill to complete the game.



6 COMPANION CUBE (PORTAL)

Okay, it's not actually a living thing but it has more personality in its curved pink heart than most games. Then you kill it. GLaDOS makes you drop the companion cube in a furnace, refusing to allow you progress until the cube tumbles to its fiery death.

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PLAY WINS YOU PRIZES

Games editor Chris McMahon is a constant source of amusement for the team and now source of prizes for those who 'Liked' this photo.



GOOD OL' JR

Our *WWE All Stars* competition from issue 204 brought with it some interesting side prizes, such as this bottle of BBQ Sauce from JR.



PLAY DISCUSSION:

Play: This is the official box art for *Resistance 3*. What do you think?

Alex 'Snottob' Forrester: Needs an eye patch over one eye :p

Play: The teeth are actually a New York skyline, which is a nice touch.

Conor Garratt: That looks NIIIIICE.

Marcus Wehr: The orange does not suit the game world at all.

Tom Robins: Looks... orgasmic.

Lee Heather: I like it, very different.

Conor Killilea: Make it darker like the game feels please.

Stuart Hammond: I really like the design.

Kevin William Smith: I like the idea of using the skyline for the teeth but the colour doesn't suit the style of the game. If it was a dark green and black or green with an off white bone colour or something then it would look good.

Sandy Waller: Hmm... Don't like the colour. Although, the online feature on this disc didn't make the game look great. I'll probably buy it, but I don't like the feel of the guns in *Resistance 2*.

Dan Hall: Bold but shite.

Richard Gyde: I like the design just not the colour.

Richard Bezoteaux: Seriously? I don't like it one bit. Puts me right off.

Neil Vincent: I like the teeth coz *Resistance* has always had buildings blended in with the name of the game.

Sean Markey: Awesome!

Lee Myatt-Bennett: I don't care what the box looks like. I just want the game to be as good as the last two. Endex.

Ruairi Turbett: So... Game of the year?

Play: Cluedo.

James Ward: Bit early isn't it?

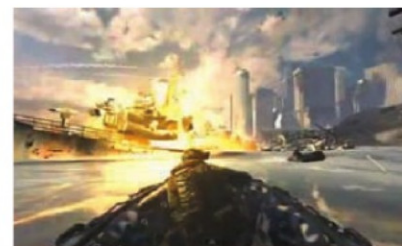
Play: Cluedo's been around for a while... we're confident.

Joe Riddell: It could be anything really. *Portal 2*? *L.A. Noire*? *Batman: Arkham City*? *Uncharted 3*?

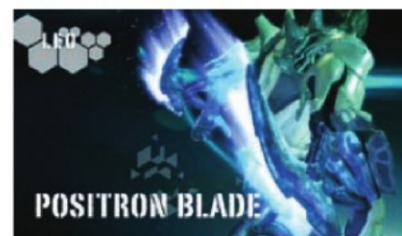
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CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE 3 – REVEAL

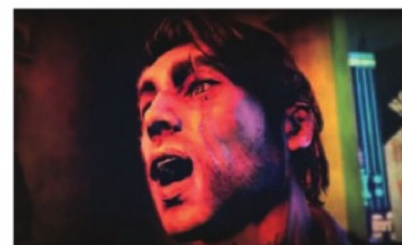


POSITRON BLADE

ANARCHY REIGNS – LEO TRAILER



MORTAL KOMBAT – FATALITY TRAILER



SHADOWS OF THE DAMNED – JOHNSON TRAILER



DEAD ISLAND – IN-GAME FOOTAGE



F.E.A.R. 3 – SOUL KING TRAILER

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What have you been saying to us on Twitter?

@PLAYMAG_UK

"L.A. Noire would be much better if it was made by BioWare" Hmmmm...

@DELUSHIN

lol yea if we wanted to investigate the death of elves.

@INTRANSIT74

how does the writer of that quote figure? Maybe if through investigating murders you discover the threat of a Reaper invasion?

@PLAYMAG_UK

Not sure. The counter argument was 'then you'd get a really obvious morality compass throughout the game.' Fair point.

@INTRANSIT74

ok, fair enough... But only if the main character is Alistair and he still wears the templar armour.

@PLAYMAG_UK

Who do you think has done better this E3 - Sony or Nintendo?

@CONORRRRRRRRR

Sony. #notafanboy

@FENIXII MOHAMMAD

Sony, hands down.

@SAMON

SONY ALWAYS WINS BABY

@JOE0305

Sony. Nintendo bore the hell out of me.

@SCOTTISHHUSKY

what's in the MGS collection?

@PLAYMAG_UK

It'll be *MGS 2*, *MGS 3* and *MGS Peace Walker*, all upgraded to HD.

@THETRIBE BRAND

any news on a new *Turok*? Love them games they r classics!! Well the older 1s anyway, just start again 4getting the recent remake.

@PLAYMAG_UK

Heard nothing. Disney owns licence and studio that made most recent *Turok* closed in January... so *Turok* is in limbo right now.

@PLAYMAG_UK

Features meeting this morning went well. Chris: "What about best... free games on PS3. Are there any free games on PS3?" Brilliant.

@SCOTTISHHUSKY

There's free ps3 games?



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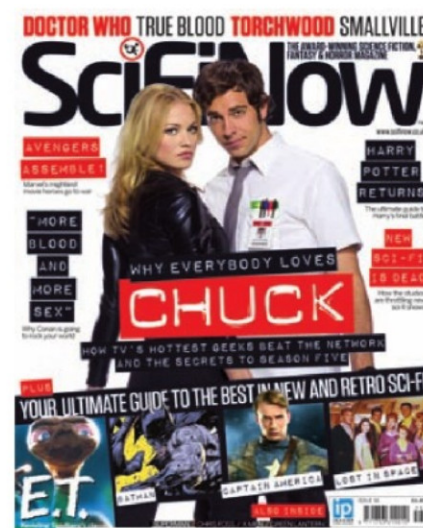
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PREVIEW

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation

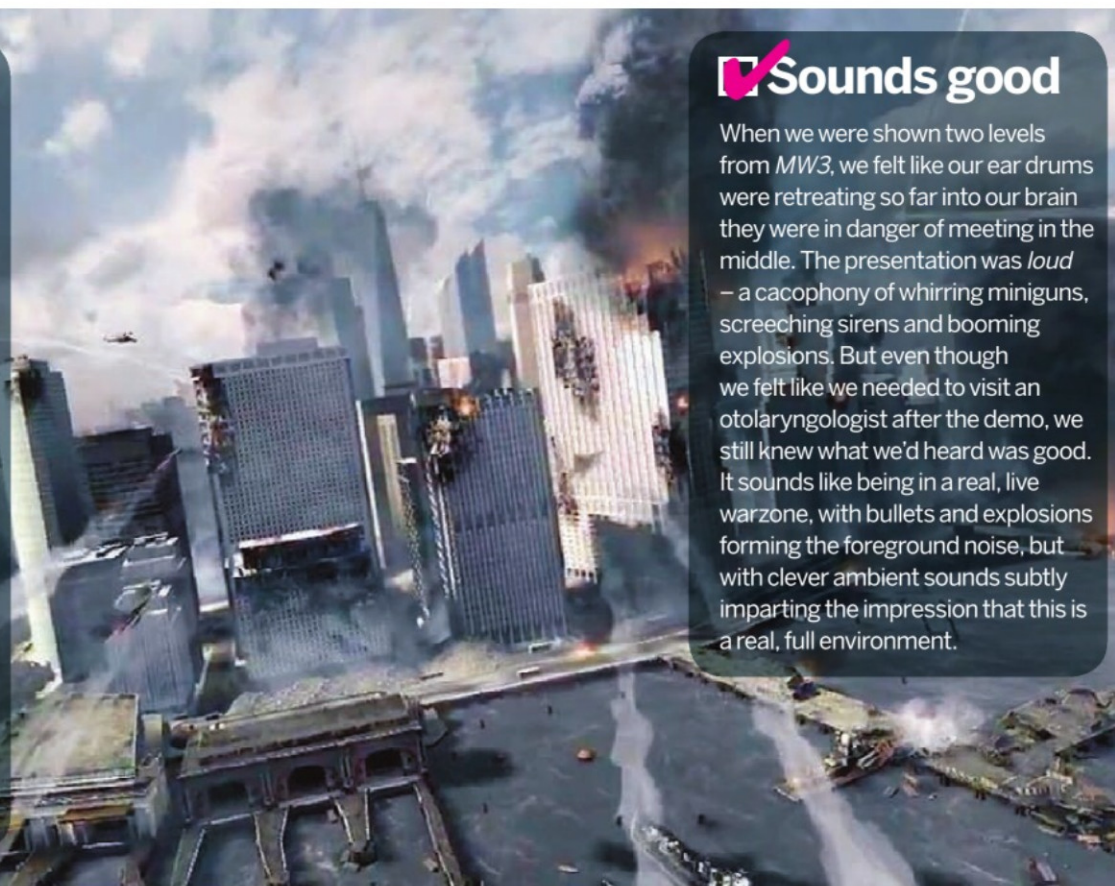
✓ The Elite gaming experience

Details of the actual multiplayer haven't been revealed, but we know a lot about the framework that will support it. Built from the ground up to support *MW3*, but also developed to work with all past *COD* titles, 'Call Of Duty: Elite' is a new and improved system to better your *COD* multiplayer experience. It tracks all of your general and specific stats – even going as far as to display your individual weapon's performance. An 'Improve' section provides an extensive *COD* guide with information and tutorials on all maps, weapons, attachments, perks, game modes and more. 'Connect' enables you to create groups so as to play with gamers of similar tastes, while 'Compete' will host regular competitions that offer prizes such as an iPad for taking the best video of a Semtex kill. So, what's the catch? While Elite will be free for all *COD* players, certain higher-level functions will only be available to those who pay. Yes, this is the *COD* subscription rumoured for so long. How much it will cost and what exactly that price will give you access to is as of yet unknown.



✓ Globetrotter

We're well accustomed to the *Call Of Duty* franchise jumping across continents during a single story – in the *Modern Warfare* series alone we've visited Azerbaijan, Pripyat, Afghanistan, the Tian Shan mountains, Moscow, Rio de Janeiro, the US and even the International Space Station in the upper atmosphere of the Earth. *Modern Warfare 3* will add more recognisable locations to this growing travelogue, with London, France and New York (Manhattan just can't catch a break in videogames, can it?). Fighting down the avenues of Wall Street or stalking down dock alleys near Canary Wharf certainly instills *MW3* with a believable sense of place and authenticity. We're looking forward to seeing what plans the dev team has for France and Germany.



✓ Sounds good

When we were shown two levels from *MW3*, we felt like our ear drums were retreating so far into our brain they were in danger of meeting in the middle. The presentation was loud – a cacophony of whirring miniguns, screeching sirens and booming explosions. But even though we felt like we needed to visit an otolaryngologist after the demo, we still knew what we'd heard was good. It sounds like being in a real, live warzone, with bullets and explosions forming the foreground noise, but with clever ambient sounds subtly imparting the impression that this is a real, full environment.



✗ It's just another Call Of Duty...

That might be music to your ears, but we have to admit to being slightly – *slightly* – nonplussed by what we've seen of *MW3* thus far. Perhaps we've just become horribly jaded and cynical, but the two levels set in London and New York seemed like more of the same – whack-a-mole corridor gameplay that lacks breadth, populated with so-so enemy AI. There's plenty of overhead infrared imagery, use of the Reaper drone, planting of thermite charges, and not one but *three* helicopter crashes. It's all very familiar stuff. We're probably just being killjoys – the game is still fast, frenetic and fluid, locked in to a gorgeous 60fps and the set pieces are nothing short of exhilarating. Still, we're hoping to see something of a little more substance in the finished product.

✓ Michael Bay has nothing on this

Some believe videogames will soon better movies when it comes to creating a sense of spectacle and *MW3* is one hell of a convincing supporting argument. We saw two levels, one showing a forward push through New York, the second a stealthier crawl through London. The former ended with an on-rails helicopter turret section around a half-constructed skyscraper. This had nothing on the latter, though – again it was an on-rails turret section, but on the back of a flatbed truck chasing a train through the London Underground. It was fantastic stuff and it ends with a truly ostentatious display of graphical prowess with a train derailment and crash. It's all scripted, but it looked bloody *brilliant*.

Modern Warfare 3 is being developed by Infinity Ward and Sledgehammer Games. Check the website for more details at www.sledgehammergames.com

RELEASE DATE: 8 NOVEMBER

Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3



Five reasons you should care, and one why you shouldn't...

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Recognisable landmarks give the game a more authentic feel.
- It's got loads of guns that go BANG and POP and KA-POW.
- The set pieces look absolutely incredible.
- It's *Modern Warfare*. You know the score.

READ ME

For *Modern Warfare 3* Activision has taken a different approach. This time it's a rhythm-action dungeon RPG. OH NO WAIT it's just another *Call Of Duty*.

✓ Spec Ops has been completely revamped

Building on the first Spec Ops outing seen in *Modern Warfare 2*, we'll see the return of the mission modes but also a brand-new flavour of Spec Ops called Survival. This is Infinity Ward's take on the ever popular Horde mode in games. Waves of enemies attack – sometimes standard, sometimes juggernauts, sometimes dogs with C4 strapped to their backs – and you fight to survive. Kills earn cash, cash can be spent on gear, weapon upgrades or even new killstreak-style rewards. One new killstreak is hinted at with a reward that lets you call in Delta Force troops, who scurry around the map picking off enemies. It's not been confirmed for multiplayer yet...

PREVIEW

SPEC OPS INNOVATES ON THE CO-OP GENRE

Modern Warfare 3 is coming back with a revamped and revitalised Spec Ops mode and it's gunning for the competition, Infinity Ward's Rob Bowling tells us...



**ROBERT
BOWLING**

Creative strategist,
Infinity Ward

When you guys were making Spec Ops, what is it you wanted to do?

Spec Ops is all about co-op. So you still have your mission-based modes, your objective missions, but Survival is all about introducing players to lots of mechanics, constantly introducing replayability. It has the progressive ranking, it has the match-making, and hour one of Spec Ops is completely different to hour ten. It has weapons, gear, killstreaks and every multiplayer map will be playable in Spec Ops.

Will Spec Ops offer something over other co-op FPS games?

I think it definitely innovates on the co-op genre. I mean, not only are you playing together as a team but you have all these features of multiplayer and you're fighting against AI. Especially in Survival mode because it never stops going until you die. So you can go for an infinite amount of waves.

Are there any games you have looked at for inspiration?

We take inspiration from everywhere. 'They do this really cool, we like that, how can that work in *Modern Warfare*...' So we're looking at all types of games. Treyarch does a great job with their Zombie mode in *Black Ops* but this is a completely different take because this is

far from zombies. We definitely looked at how we can put the *Modern Warfare* twist on the Survival game type.

Have the multiplayer maps been tweaked for Survival or are they dropped straight in?

No, they definitely need tweaking. You've got to figure out the placement of the killstreak box, the gear box, the weapon box, the path that the AI is going to take. So there's definitely

We take inspiration from everywhere. 'They do this really cool, how can that work in *Modern Warfare*...' We're looking at all types of games

a layer of work put over the multiplayer maps before it's turned into a Spec Ops map.

Do you look at what Treyarch's doing with *Call Of Duty*?

Not only do we look at our own games and how we want to build on that but we look at what Treyarch's doing, we look at what Epic's doing, we look at what everybody is doing. We're constantly building and there's so much great stuff out there, we want to make sure we're looking at everything and getting inspiration from everywhere.

Do you talk about COD with Treyarch? Is there communication with them?

The two studios are pretty close. We'll trade builds and check out what they're working on and they'll check out what we're working on. In terms of design philosophy, we both have our very own different tastes and how we design. But there's open communication and friendly dialogue.

What question have you been asked most about Spec Ops?

[laughs] The question I've been asked most about Spec Ops. Erm... that's a good question.

There must be one that stood out...

Honestly, I think the number one question is, 'what's the highest wave that people have got to?' As soon as people come out the room, they want to know how they stacked up against everyone else.

Now I'm disappointed it's the first thing I asked when I stopped playing Spec Ops. I've fallen into the trap.

[laughs] No, no, it's good! That's why we added leaderboards in Spec Ops. That's something people wanted from *Modern Warfare 2*, to be able to see how they stack up against other people. And here's what's really cool – I don't think we've ever talked about it before but you've made me think about it – you get paired with your team. So me and you





could play Spec Ops and we'll be inserted into the leaderboards as a two-man team. Now you and somebody else could go play and you'll be inserted as a separate leaderboard entry. So you're not actually competing with other people, you're competing with yourself with other partners.

How many maps can we expect in Spec Ops on launch day?

Can't give a number because the game's not done yet. We're still building maps right now. So I can't give a number but there will be a lot.

How many times have people asked you if there will be DLC?

None, actually!

But DLC is the stock question that always gets asked.

Yeah, I know. I'm surprised.

Okay, let's get the official response then – will there be DLC for Spec Ops?

I don't know yet [laughs]. We're not even done finishing the actual game. We want there to be a lot of maps in Spec Ops because it's all the multiplayer maps and it's single-player locations, so there's a lot of content there.

Seriously, I'm surprised you haven't been asked that. You must get a lot of the same questions coming through.

Yeah, yeah, definitely. Well you always get the super big, 'what's new?' And it's like, 'oh okay, prepare yourself!' If you give me a big question like that, I'm going to run with it. I'm going to break down everything I can. Especially with something like Spec Ops.

How complete is the multiplayer?

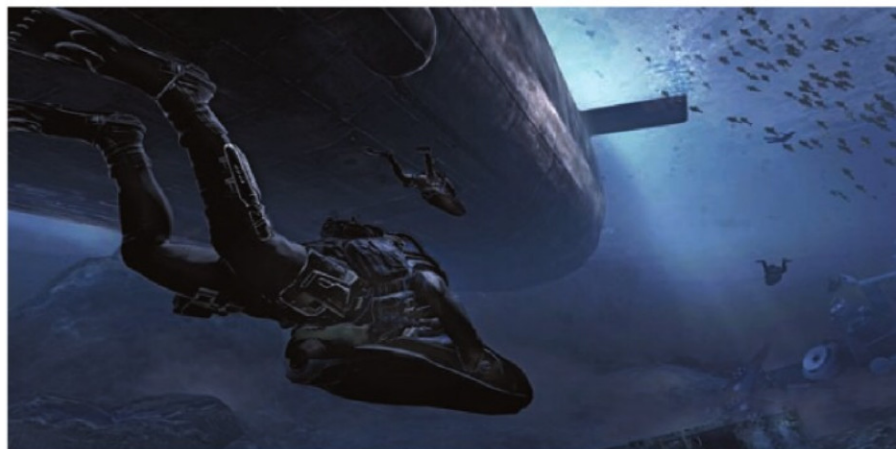
It's up and running. We play it every night but multiplayer is that thing that at this point in development, it's changing every day. We're constantly putting something in, trying it out, taking it out, reshuffling things for balance... it's changing every day. That's why I always think it's funny because you always get multiplayer questions. You know, like, 'what can you tell me about multiplayer?' We are far from finished! We don't want to say anything about multiplayer because it could be completely different the next day.

Have people been coming out of Spec Ops asking about multiplayer?

A little bit, yeah. They'll say, 'hey, I've seen this, is it in multiplayer?' We get that a lot with our single-player demos. I'll show a level, an AI guy will go down and he's firing his pistol and crawling away and they'll say, 'oh, Last Stand is back in multiplayer'. But it's a completely different feature set! We'll pull out some crazy weapon and they're like, 'this will be great in multiplayer'. Actually it would be extremely overpowered in multiplayer! ☒

● Multiplayer is up and running but Infinity Ward isn't talking about it just yet.

● The highest wave we reached was 12. The record among press is 19. Bah.



PREVIEW



1 3D IS AMAZING

One of the features Naughty Dog was showing behind closed doors was *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception* in 3D. It's something they're particularly proud of and Christophe Balestra, co-president of Naughty Dog, talking exclusively to us, explains why. "It's a lot of work," he admits. "It's very difficult. 3D is great but if you want to do it right, you have to put a lot of resources into it. If you look at *Avatar*, they spent a lot of time getting that 3D right. It's not like flipping a switch and everything works. In everything we do, you have to adjust the zero plane... what we call the zero plane is like, when it's 2D and how it sticks out of the screen, you have to adjust it so your eyes understand what it's saying. It is a bit complicated but that's how you get the best result."

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception

Drake's case for PS3 supremacy



2

MULTIPLAYER IS UNIQUE

We've tried it, loved it and sworn at it far more times in multiplayer-anger-that-actually-means-it's-good than we care to admit. Most importantly, it feels unique. "What we learned is to make the game as *Uncharted* as possible, even if it's multiplayer," says

Balestra. "You don't want to compete with other games and give a similar experience. You want to give them something they haven't played before. We'll be competing against the other big games that we all know. We'll be giving gamers something else."

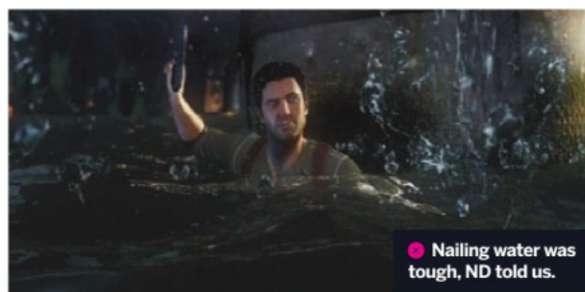
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- One of the most stunning games coming to this or any other console ever.
- Single-player, multiplayer and co-op all in one amazing package of awesome.
- Sully, Chloe and Elena are returning and all have a part to play.
- Do we really need to give you any more reasons? Seriously, it's *Uncharted*.

READ ME

Elena Fisher, Nathan Drake's on/off love interest since the first game, can be seen with a ring on her left hand. Could she be engaged? And to who?

ACTION MAN Drake's set pieces are going to be crazier than ever if his latest trailer is anything to go by



Nailing water was tough, ND told us.



The Atlantis of the Sands will hold many dangers.

3

BETA WILL ENSURE MULTIPLAYER ROCKS

It's been in the pipeline for a while but as Balestra explains, the beta is absolutely vital to ensure that Naughty Dog has the best multiplayer game possible, especially when it comes to the game's servers running smoothly. "For us, it's going to be a lot about our servers, making sure everything works fine. Making sure we have the right stats and the maps are balanced, weapons are balanced," he explains. "Making sure there aren't any weak points in the system and also seeing people's reactions for the boosters. We want to get a feel for how people have fun and make sure the tech works fine."



4

LISTENING TO FANS

"Making the puzzles a little bit more difficult," replies Balestra when we ask him what changes Naughty Dog will be making as they push on from *Uncharted 2*. "People have been asking for that. But in terms of the balance between the shooting, the exploration and the puzzles, it will be more or less the same. I think we kind of like the formula and people like the formula, even if we change it a little bit. So yeah, always trying to push the limits."

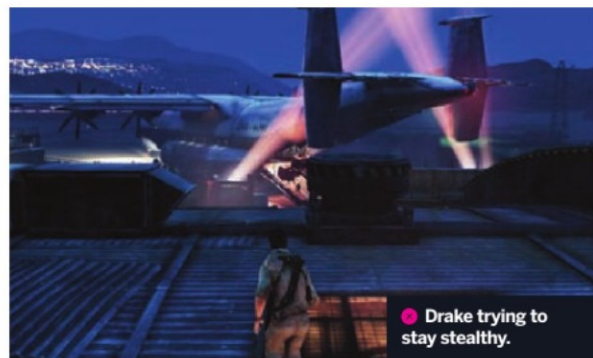


CALL OF DUTY INSPIRATION

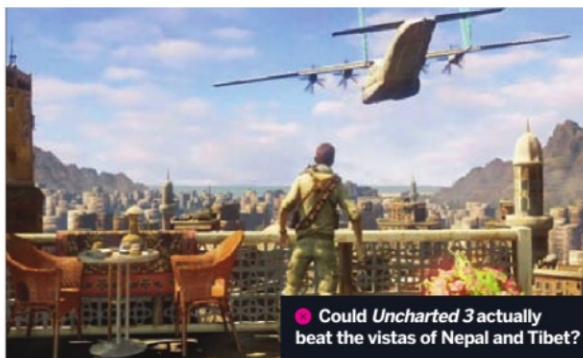
The boosters are new to multiplayer and of course, us being the trend-setting, trail-blazing games journalists we are, we have to compare everything to *Call Of Duty* (and then hope a heavy dose of sarcasm covers our arses when we're called out on it). Even so – the boosters are inspired by *Call Of Duty*, right?

"Of course, there is a bit of *Call Of Duty* inspiration there," he admits. "But it's also trying to make the game more interesting. It's always good to make the players feel like they have an advantage. You can choose the boosters, so that's why we had the customisations for all the characters, so you can feel really unique."

5



● Drake trying to stay stealthy.



● Could *Uncharted 3* actually beat the vistas of Nepal and Tibet?



● Hanging off a cargo plane. It's the new hanging off the back of a train!

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: 2012

The midair antics of *BioShock: Infinite* look to be unbelievably exciting.

BioShock: Infinite

Who's afraid of the big, bad bird?

PS3

Look! Up in the sky. Is it a bird?

Umm, yes, actually it sort of is. We're sorry to cut that *Superman* intro short, but a bird is exactly what you need to be worrying about thanks to *BioShock: Infinite*. It may not be a true bird and it may not be an entirely mechanical bird either, but it is the thing that will be haunting your every footstep and casting its menacing shadow over you as you progress through *Infinite*'s otherwise pleasingly sunny and idyllic floating city of Columbia.

As we've discussed in a number of previous previews, though, Columbia may well look like a utopia, perhaps even more so than Rapture in its prime, but this is a city that is on the verge of consuming itself and you may well be the catalyst for its destruction.

You will arrive in this symbol of American independence and ingenuity at the request of a family

in New York, who are desperate for their daughter to be returned to them. She has been locked away in a tower in Columbia for the last 12 years, protected and detained by a creature known as the Songbird. You will probably have caught a glimpse of it during gameplay trailers released last year and its pursuit of its prey is unrelenting.

The girl, though, is perhaps *Infinite*'s truly mysterious character as she is far more than she first appears. You will hopefully be familiar already with your AI partner Elizabeth from previous previews of *BioShock: Infinite* and perhaps even have some understanding of her unique powers, but we know much more now.

Elizabeth has the ability to see and manipulate Tears in the world. These are essentially rips in space and time that she can manipulate to create portals or turn time forwards and backwards. Don't be surprised

if you suddenly find yourself facing down an ambulance in an urban street for no apparent reason. Strange things can happen when this lady gets involved.

However, as powerful as Elizabeth may be she is unused to her abilities and does not have mastery over them yet. You'll be the one in charge of how and when she gets involved in any confrontations. Playing as Booker DeWitt you will also be able to give yourself some special powers thanks to the Vigors you can drink and, when combined with the familiar *BioShock* gunplay and Elizabeth's support, the combat in *BioShock: Infinite* promises to be some of the most intense we've ever seen.

Fighting against the inhabitants of Columbia will, of course, play a large part in your experience of the city, but not the only part. The conflict between the Founders and the Vox Populi that is splitting the

city in two gives its citizens far more things to worry about than your ex-Pinkerton agent.

Having said that, both groups seem intent on capturing Elizabeth for their own ends. As the Founders look to protect what they have created and remain separated from the outside world and the Vox Populi look to bring down the system and lead a workers' revolution, tensions are only going to keep rising.

But your key concern should still be the Songbird and its relentless pursuit of Elizabeth. Irrational Games has compared it to an abusive husband and wife relationship as Elizabeth is desperate to leave it and get away, but can't seem to imagine a life without it.

It's a rather gut-wrenching concept that promises to make *BioShock: Infinite* one of the most emotionally charged and perhaps also politically charged games we've seen on PlayStation 3 to date. Which is saying something frankly. Who would have thought that at the beginning of this generation?

BioShock: Infinite is being developed in Quincy, Massachusetts by Irrational Games. Check out irrationalgames.com for regular podcasts and blogs.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



A living, breathing city that's only now beginning to fall in on itself, unlike Rapture.



Amazing new co-op gameplay with your AI partner Elizabeth and her space bending.



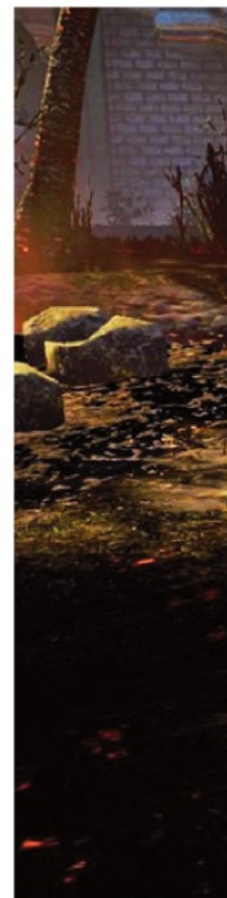
A new backdrop of political and social turmoil to get your grey matter working on.



Basically a bigger, bolder and more engrossing *BioShock* than before, which is fine by us.

READ ME

You can't kill everyone and you shouldn't try. Choosing when to pull your gun out and when to keep quiet in this game is one of the most important choices.





Comstock is a leader among the Founders and could help Elizabeth control her powers.



Reviving this horse may be more trouble than it's worth, but you should try anyway.

GANDER THE PROPAGANDA

Once again BioShock is all about art

The art style and background detail of the *BioShock* world to date has always been worth remarking upon. The posters and slogans on the walls of Rapture told you everything you needed to know about the downfall of that city and the same appears to be true of Columbia, too. This poster showing the Songbird intimidating a member of the radical Marxist Vox Populi movement immediately gives you some impression of the oppressive government in Columbia and the state of fear its people live in. It also reminds you of the menace posed by the Songbird, whose role seems simply to defeat the enemies of the 'patriots' of the city.



PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

A battle of good versus medieval

PS3

The shiniest entry in the *Elder Scrolls* franchise is simply stunning to behold.

Glistening snowy peaks surround the pathway to a local village, plants perform a beautiful dance in the wind, while salmon skip out of the water and fight their way upstream.

Oh, and a stonking great big dragon has swooped

down and set our hero on fire, natch!

Skyrim features a delicate balance between the beautiful subtleties of the mythical kingdom it inhabits and fantastical, heart-pounding action that lets you stab a dragon in the nose. Our brief hands-off demo took us through a few smaller encounters with locals, into a mountain dungeon,

fighting a giant frost spider and then battling two dragons to cap the experience.

It's not just the epic scale of the whole thing that amazes but the sheer depth of the experience. Multiple dialogue paths, hundreds of items to scavenge and combat that

The epic scale and the depth of the experience will amaze

ranges from projectile, melee, stealth and magical attacks.

Frankly, it's all a bit overwhelming but we have endeavoured to cover all of the major ingredients to this mythical madness.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is under development by Bethesda Softworks. Carry on the skyrimming over at www.elderscrolls.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Dragons, dragons and... erm... even more bloomin' dragons!
- ❑ Shout spells will produce world-changing devastating attacks.
- ❑ A deep, brutal and completely customisable combat system.
- ❑ Absolutely huge landscape to explore, loot and battle across.

READ ME

Within the wonderful world of *Skyrim* you will be able to find more than 300 fully written books that can be read.

Fighting Chance

Bows, arrows, swords and spells

Stealth takedowns, furious sword swipes and projectile weaponry all make up *Skyrim*'s rather hefty combat mechanics. Mangy wolves posed no threat and other locals were dispatched with relative ease in the demo – however, taking on a mammoth skirted towards cockiness. The action has a more visceral impact than the sequel's predecessor with a lovely dollop of red stuff spluttering about. However, to truly master the game you'll need to select the right combination of spells and weaponry to expose your enemies' weaknesses. The final dragon was taken down using arrows to piece the beast's wings, firing ice spells and then using a Shout to summon a lethal thunderstorm. It all makes for versatile destructive combat with some jaw-dropping world-changing physics.

Dragon's Soul

Something you'll find worth shouting about

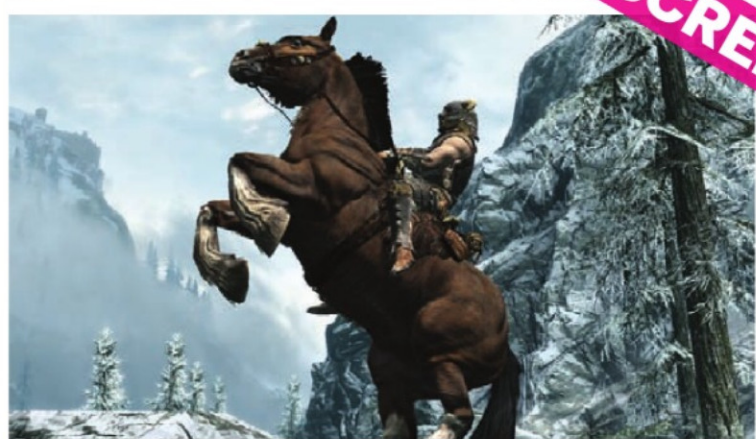
Dragon encounters make up one of the more enticing aspects of the action throughout *Skyrim*. We witnessed two battles, the first of which saw residents of a local castle join the fight to take down the winged menace, taking several minutes before it fell. Your hero is able to absorb the soul of a deceased dragon which can be spent on Shout spells. These Shouts can be learnt at Wordwalls and using the logic of 'fight fire with fire,' our hero claims a fire-breathing Shout that spits powerful little flames to singe the scaly skin of the next flying foe. It'll be up to you whether taking on a dragon is worth the reward.



Got The Horn

Meet Skyrim's fearless new warrior

It takes a certain type of man to get away with wearing a helmet with massive horns protruding out of it. In this case that'll be Dovahkiin – known as Dragonborn to some – a warrior sent on a mission to kick dragon tail. He'll be able to update his skills – which comes in the form of a constellation skill tree in the sky – and can claim new abilities via Standing Stones. With the left and right triggers corresponding to the character's hands, you can mix and match your weaponry to deadly effect. Running into battle with two deadly axes, or dual-wielding spells to significantly boost their proficiency? The choice is yours.



Twin Peaks

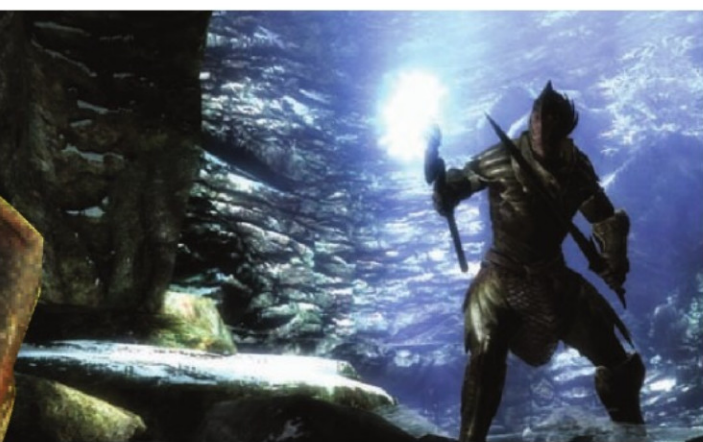
Mountainous ranges to explore

Anything you see in the distance of *Skyrim*, you can reach. Every huge peak is scalable (the highest of which is Throat of the World) and with 150 dungeons to explore, you'll be traversing your way through multiple climates and cultures. We're walking through the local town of Riverwood, scouting out the locals just to absorb the sheer amount of detail in both the character models and the extensive amount of dialogue in the game. If you wish, you can try your hand at a local profession, or if you're feeling like a bastard, you can sabotage community resources that will send reverberations that'll drastically affect the town's economy. Go on, you know you'll want to.

Spell This

It's a kind of magic

Spells come in all sorts of shapes and sizes in *Skyrim*. The wealth of which featured in the demo had us losing count somewhere around the point our hero force-pushed someone off the top of a mountain. Magical abilities come in all sorts of elemental variations: Frostbite freezes approaching fiends and various fire spells set goons ablaze. The more tempestuous spell Frenzy sends enemies attacking each other, and we found defensive spells quite neat, with Circle of Protection making enemies cack it and leg it off in the opposite direction. With such a massive amount of conjuring at your disposal, Bethesda has implemented a bookmark option so you can skip to your favourites.



CREATURE FEATURE

A date with the darling inhabitants of Skyrim

Considering that Bethesda has chosen to rebuild its engine to startling effect, it should have come as no surprise that each new beastie featured in *Skyrim* is as alluringly grizzly as Robin Williams' knuckles. Our short demo did pack in a few new hideous creatures, notably a giant spider that protected the dungeon's treasure. From the infinitesimal hairs on its legs, to its dripping fangs, it was the stuff of nightmares. Lovely, visceral, gaming nightmares.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2012

Mass Effect 3

The end of an era, a series – and of Earth?

PS3

Normally, when the Earth's invaded by giant tripods from beyond the stars, we rely on something simple to kill them off, like Tom Cruise or the common cold. Sadly, when they're sentient robot tripods like the Reapers, who've spent millenia doing their research on TripAdvisor and have actually had their flu jabs, humanity's a bit screwed. As Commander Shepard finds out at the beginning of *Mass Effect 3*, all humanity's advanced weaponry is "just bows and arrows against the lightning" (quote, HG Wells.)

Casey Hudson, BioWare's executive producer, is running us through three sections of the game as a demo. First, a section on Earth immediately after the events of *Mass Effect 2*; then a section in an unnamed science base, featuring many returning characters; then, finally, back on Earth again, with Shepard and his comrades attempting to strike back against the Reapers.

Hudson says, "This is the pinnacle of the *Mass Effect* series; we've been working on this for eight years and it has all led up to this... it's a story that is as big as we can tell." To remind you, the Reapers' visit to Earth isn't to sun themselves on our ample

coastlines; they want to absorb all organic life. "As Commander Shepard, your job is to round up the forces of the galaxy; fleets, war assets, armies – the biggest force you can to retake the Earth."

As a trilogy, it pulls in data from the first two games (though the first, annoyingly, isn't on PS3), so your earlier actions really do count in this game. If you were an arse in *Mass Effect 2*, that might really screw up your relations with the rest of the universe in *Mass Effect 3*. However, if this is your first time, as Hudson puts it, "we've designed this as the very best place to dive into the *Mass Effect* universe; the start of a galactic war."

In the first section of gameplay, Commander Shepard is attempting to destroy a Reaper base, having disabled its blast shield. It's essentially a great hole in the ground about the size of Leicester Square. Flying far overhead is the Normandy, which Shepard uses to call down an orbital strike on the base, while under fire from a new set of enemies 'the Cannibals'.

The strike has something of a counter-productive effect, though, as, from deep underground, a Reaper crawls up. As tall as an office-block, the three-legged pyramidal monster chases

Shepard, Liara and Garrus as they flee on the back of an ATV, blasting away futilely with its turret chaingun. An orbital strike from the Normandy takes the goliath down for a second, breaking its metres-thick armour, but soon it advances again, lowering its massive foot towards the vehicle...

The second section featured Shepard trying to evacuate the last of the Krogan females from a medical facility managed by Mordin, the Salarian doctor who developed the genophage that sterilised their race. A lot of characters return during this sequence, including Wrex manning a gunship, but most notable is the return of Assault Troopers from Cerberus, the human resistance movement, as enemies. Players who donated the Reaper remains to them at the end of *Mass Effect 2* may come to regret their actions. Especially when they encounter the Cerberus Atlas mech at the end of this escape attempt... (though, thankfully, you can eventually take control of that).

It also introduces stealth, the omniblade and weapon modification. There are benches around the world that allow you to equip upgrades and components. Shepard also demonstrates that he can move more acrobatically,

jumping gaps and climbing ladders. Finally, it's allowed you to make genuine decisions in how you level up your characters, with diverging choices at each stage.

The final area we see is the very beginning of the game. "This is on Earth where Shepard has been detained for hearings for prior actions... you're trying to escape because the Reapers have arrived." From Shepard's viewpoint, we see the Reapers plummeting from orbit, like giant crabs, spreading out across the Earth's cities. Around him, the new Reaper Cannibals (gun-equipped Husks) are attacking, wiping out the population; the Reapers are taking down anything larger. Admiral Anderson stays behind to manage the resistance; Shepard is dispatched to get help.

The central galaxy map has changed as well. You're going to be able to liberate important facilities, acquire key war assets, rescue key personnel and liberate particular cities, build alliances, with multiple missions per planet. "Every victory you win," says Hudson, "becomes an important asset in your war against the Reapers."

We honestly didn't expect, when the *Mass Effect* trilogy started, that it would end in a reprise of *War Of The Worlds*, but if you're going to riff off any piece of fiction to end your series, that's not a bad place to start.

Mass Effect 3 is being developed by the brainy boys of BioWare – check out www.bioware.com for more info.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Superb team-action.



Cutting-edge SF graphics.



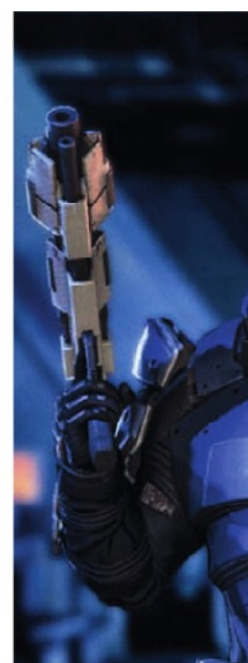
The best storyline since *Planescape: Torment*.



MFing tripods.

READ ME

The Reapers take the war to the people of Earth – can they manage to fend off Commander Shepard and create a machine utopia?





Yes, it's Garrus. That glow is to bring out the blue in his eyes. Eye.



How many graphics effects can we cram into one screenshot?

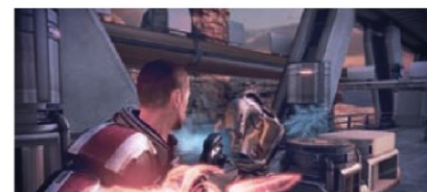


REMEMBERING THE NEW

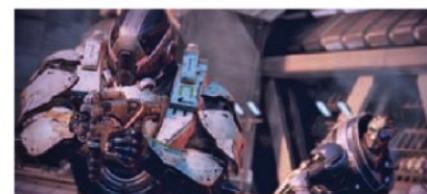
What's actually changed

UNLIKE MASS EFFECT 2, BioWare hasn't altered the fundamentals for *Mass Effect 3*, as it (fairly) thinks it's nailed what people want. What it has done, however, is tweak the mechanics to polish what it already has there.

Ooh, a baton. They'll be digging out the pepper spray next.



Seeing this, the American journalists went "yeaaaaah". So much for impartiality. It's an alteration of the omniblade for close combat – basically a big glowing spike that kills anything.



The *Mass Effect* series has never done stealth, but combined with the omniblade, Shepard is now capable of creeping up on enemies and insta-killing them. It still seems a little clunky, but gives you some nice options.



From what we've seen, Shepard does have to face off against more large enemies than ever before – understandable, given that the Reapers are so huge. The Atlas Mech is also huge – but thankfully, Shepard can take control of it.



Peekaboo! Oh, silly Mr Shepard!

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Batman: Arkham City

The best Batman game ever?
It's looking likely...

PS3 In the majority of past *Batman* games the Caped Crusader has been little more than an art asset – a cipher that looked and acted like Batman but actually shared very little in common with the character from which it took inspiration.

Yet what made Rocksteady's *Arkham Asylum* such a success was it played to Batman's strength and zeroed in on the gameplay. "We're very much a gameplay studio," Rocksteady's Sefton Hill tells us. "We're not *Call Of Duty* spectacle but we're going to have really fun gameplay mechanics. The fun is in

what you're doing with your hands in terms of playing the game, story and interaction of those key characters."

"You don't have to blow everything up to sell games. You can have something that is hopefully a bit more intelligent and a bit more about gameplay. There is always room for that. We never dumbed anything down." So, does *Arkham City* blow everything up? We break down Gotham City, Batman's new moves and Riddler's deadly Challenge Rooms to find out.

Batman: Arkham City is being developed by Rocksteady Studios. Find out more at www.batmanarkhamcity.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Batman.
- Catwoman.
- Batman.
- Batman.

READ ME

Instead of an interesting fact, let's get you in the mood by singing the *Batman* theme tune... to the Batmobile! 'Dananananananana BATMAN!' Pretty good rendition, huh?

THE ROTTEN APPLE

A playground for the destitute and deprived

"We felt like we'd done Arkham island, and Gotham City felt like the right place to go," explains Rocksteady's Sefton Hill. "Walling off a section of Gotham City, creating Arkham City, putting all the worst supervillains in there, the only thing standing in their way being Batman. That was the genesis of the idea. Then we thought okay, how does Batman get around? So the concept came first as a worst-case scenario for Batman then we spent a hell of a lot of time on Batman, the navigation and making it feel as smooth and fun as possible." One location will be Monarch Theatre, where Bruce Wayne's parents were killed and Batman was born. Catwoman can use her claw climb while her bullwhip acts just like Batman's grapple boost, while The Caped Crusader can glide. You can even get across the city without ever touching the ground.



KICK, PUNCH, IT'S ALL IN THE MIND

The world's most skilled fighter doubles his repertoire of moves

One of the greatest elements in *Batman: Arkham Asylum* was its 'Freeflow' combat system – a close-quarters hand-to-hand brawling mechanic of attacks and counters that made you truly feel like Batman. The system returns here, but even more enemies can attack, sometimes using double or even triple simultaneous assaults. This means Batman has double and triple simultaneous counters – the amount of combat

animations having been doubled for the sequel. We're happy to hear that the Challenge Rooms will also return for a second time – collecting enough of Riddler's clues will unlock them and you can even square off against the trickster in the final Challenge Room. New moves also extend to gadgets. We played through one Challenge Room where we had to use Batman's new double zip-line move to avoid the rotating blades of death beneath us.

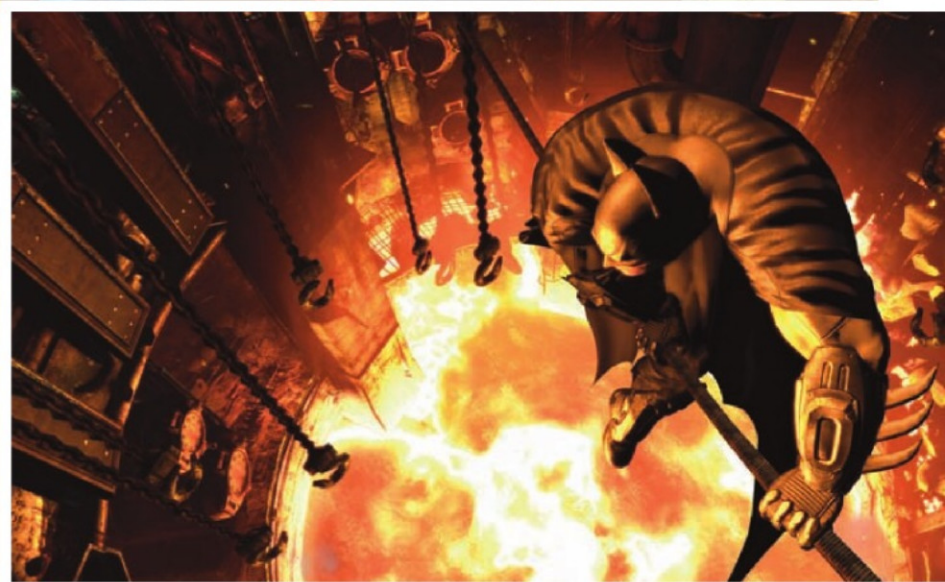
MEOW

This kitty's got claws

Selina Kyle – aka Catwoman. An excellent athlete, expert thief, and lover of all things feline. You'll be playing as this slinky, PVC-clad seductress in a story that intertwines with that of The Bat. Approximately ten per cent of the game will take place in her knee-length boots, giving the game a change of pace as you engage in some not-so-honourable behaviour. It's not just her moral code that differs from Batman, but her physical ability, too. Catwoman is faster and more nimble; flipping, somersaulting and gyrating around her enemies during combat in an athletic display that's more about speed than it is raw power. Here, Batman's Grapple Gun is replaced by a bullwhip and his Batarangs with bolas. Catwoman has other tricks, too, such as caltrops that can be deployed mid-fight.



BIG SCREEN



THE PENGUIN

Scarier than Danny DeVito

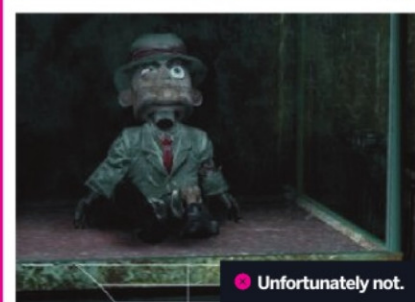
Batman now has to take on The Penguin as well. That waddling twerp from *Batman Returns*, you think? Indeed. With smashed beer bottle lodged in his face where his monocle should be. Ouch.

"Penguin is really interesting because he's very different to Joker, someone who joins Joker's gang is very much expendable whereas Penguin only wants the best," says Hill. "He has a gladiator pit where everyone goes in and fights and only the last guy left standing gets to join his crew, so his guys are really tough, he has weapons in Arkham City as well. Even at the start of the game if you go to Penguin's turf, there are guys with guns there. It's a dangerous place to be."

And that beer bottle? "He's got a story in the game that he tells about what happened to the other guy. He got the bottle in the face but the other guy ended up worse off." Yikes.

MANTLE OF THE BAT, CAT AND...

Who will you get to play as in Batman: Arkham City?



PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: 2012

Far Cry 3

Super-polished anonymous shooter 3 is back!



Ooh, how picture postcard; where is that, Benidorm?

It's a non-specific island as far as we can tell, floating tranquilly in foreign seas.

Sounds just like Benidorm. I'm betting that's not as tranquil as it seems; perhaps it's a FAR CRY from the island paradise it appears to be?

What gave it away? The title at the top of this preview? Yes, this is Ubisoft's continuation of the *Far Cry* franchise, which started way back in 2003 with a random hard man fighting an island of badasses and, ultimately, mutant monstrous idiots who were stupidly difficult to kill, led by a mad scientist. It was followed by the *Far Cry Instincts* games, where other random characters got mutant superpowers and *Far Cry 2*, which ultimately had a much better plot, and some really original ideas, including its use of fire and AI companions, but also had some amazingly annoying design decisions, such as enemy checkpoints that respawned within seconds of clearing them.

Monstrous idiots spoiling the tranquility? EXACTLY like Benidorm then. So much for the history lesson. Is there anything distinctive about the *Far Cry* series then?

Not really. Initially, it was famed for its clear blue skies, lush jungle locations and super-powered formulae, but that went out with *Far Cry 2*'s arid savannah

and compromised realism. After that, the only distinctive look it had was one man against the world using an exceptionally high-powered game engine. As the initial developer, Crytek, has also left to do its own super hi-tech thing (*Crysis 2*), *Far Cry* was a pretty much gutted series.

I take it *Far Cry 3* is going to fix this then? Otherwise you wouldn't be bothering with the foreshadowing. Right again, our irritatingly accurate chum. *Far Cry 3*'s developer (Ubisoft Montreal) has realised that its movement away from the original game left the series a little empty, so it has mixed the last two iterations up and ended up with something that has a little bit of each.

Arid islands? Beach savannah? Hi-tech checkpoints?

No, it has the *Heart Of Darkness* plot and characters of *Far Cry 2*, with the island roaming and glorious seas of the original. We got to see a demo level where the protagonist, some plebian idiot, has lost his girlfriend on an island full of savages and finds himself being tormented by a French prat called Vaas (a madman designed by someone who's only seen madmen in action flicks) who thinks he is god. This lunatic's gang of natives is massacring the tribespeople in the background, while he lectures you about the nature of insanity.

So, does he set you free, with a slap on the back, your girlfriend in your arms and tickets off-island?

Not exactly, no. Instead, he ties you up and drops you down a chasm. Luckily there's some water at the bottom, so once you rip your hands up escaping the rock you're tied to, you can get out and start taking out his men. This reintroduces the one mechanic common to both games; open-world assaults, in which you work out where to go and how you're going to handle getting through a militarised zone to your next objective.

Let me guess, your options are snipe, stealth or gung-ho lunacy?

Exactly. Of course, the enemies aren't as tough or clever as you, so end up massacred in short order, whatever you do. Then it's a daring escape to a helicopter, which your hero hijacks and tries to fly off before, like all helicopters in all first-person shooters, it gets shot down because giving you the freedom to go anywhere is too much for the developers to cope with.

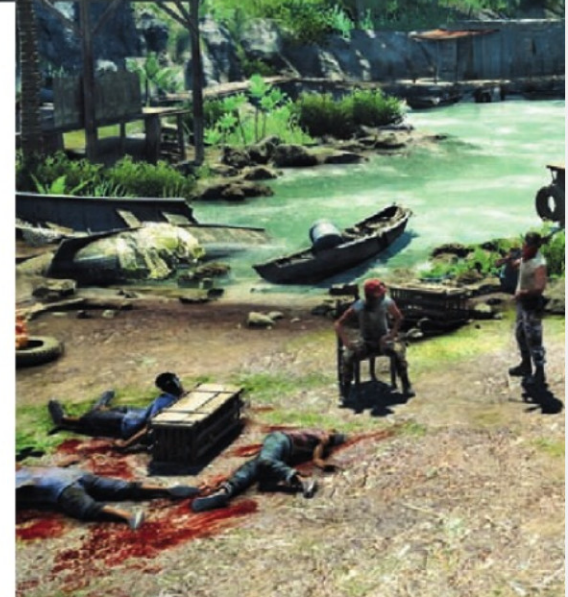
And then Vaas gets you again?

Right. So the whole demo section is completely pointless to the story. The game does look attractive, though, as you'd expect, and the action is fun, if not original in any way.

Far Cry 3 is being developed by three Ubisoft studios; Montreal, Massive and Shanghai. Check out <http://far-cry.ubi.com/far-cry-3/en-GB/>

READ ME

Jason Brody's girlfriend is missing, in a Pacific paradise turned nightmare. Jason must battle against the native gangs to rescue her, or alternatively sod it all and just go sunbathe.



VAAS GOING ON?

Introducing the maniac

ONE THING MANKIND has never been short of is war stories, which is why it's puzzling that one, *Heart Of Darkness*, as told by Joseph Conrad and later converted into *Apocalypse Now*, has taken such a hold on generations of writers. We have seen so many half-assed rip-offs of it over the years – so many "good men gone native" – that we'd really rather appreciate it if designers (because there are few writers with power in games) read some other books or saw some other films – *Kim*, say, or *Fitzcarraldo*.

Vaas seems to fit that Kurtz mould. He seems bright, chats with you plausibly, if in a hugely clichéd manner, about the nature of sanity, but his philosophising is what you'd imagine philosophy was if you'd overheard it and only managed to write down every other word. It's a blessed relief when he chucks you over the cliff's edge so you don't have to listen to him any more.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ A ranting Frenchman with a Mohican.
- ❑ Open-world combat and strategies.
- ❑ The complete lack of connection between the games in the series.
- ❑ It's got really nice water. Really nice.



anging shadows.



How you approach each area is entirely your choice.



At E3 Volition announced there will be exclusive content for PS3, but would only reveal that it will include a new game mode.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Saints Row: The Third

So over the top it's practically gone into orbit



When Rockstar took the GTA series in a more serious direction with GTA IV, a gap opened in the market for Volition to fill, which it happily did with the absurd but brilliant *Saints Row 2*.

Saints Row: The Third is even more ridiculous, over the top and insane. It does allow you to beat enemies with a big floppy dildo after all, or use the Apocafist – massive gloves that splatter pedestrians into slushy pools of blood. Not enough for you? The Third Street Saints are now so powerful that you can call down an air strike on enemy gangs or rain down death from above with laser beams and missiles. Of course, you'll probably be doing all of this dressed as a luchador or an astronaut. Very little is out of the question in Steelport City.

But it's not all random carnage. There are genuinely progressive additions, too. Completing 'activities' awards you with respect, which can be used to buy perks and rewards. Two-player co-op is also available. There's also much more set piece-driven gameplay – one scene sees



the player shooting through a plane and parachuting down to the city below.

There remain problems; the gunplay still looks stilted and slow, for example. But in terms of unapologetic, out-and-out open-world madness, *Saints Row: The Third* is the craziest there is.

Saints Row: The Third is being developed by Volition. Find out more about it at www.saintsrow.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- This is no rags-to-riches story – you start the game with guns, money and power.
- Steelport City has been built from the ground up for this game.
- Car handling has been tweaked, making it more weighty and realistic.
- You can kick pedestrians in the nuts.





RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

SoulCalibur V

A tale of souls and swords... again

PS3

It's not quite taken 17 years for another *Soul* game to make its way to PlayStation 3, but for a time it felt like it would take that long. What has taken 17 years, though, is another reason to whack each other over the head with swords, axes and nunchucks. Developer Project Soul, reformed specially to create another in the classic weapon-based combat series, is opting for a darker style to the traditionally rather bold and brash series.

Combat also sees a fair few differences – clashes are faster, more fluid and even more elegant. An emphasis on shorter, one-handed blades backs up these claims – it is a lot easier

to wave a rapier around than it is whatever the hell Siegfried used to carry, after all. There are new 'super' moves, which are earned by building up meters in general attacking and defensive play. If the idea of super moves sounds like *Street Fighter*, that's because it is.

We're waiting to see where the bravery will come from. Producer Hisaharu Tago admitted that the trailer shown off was built using old assets and an old engine, with the new stuff yet to be dropped in. When we see that, that's when we'll start throwing our opinions around because, right now, it's just a little bit meh.

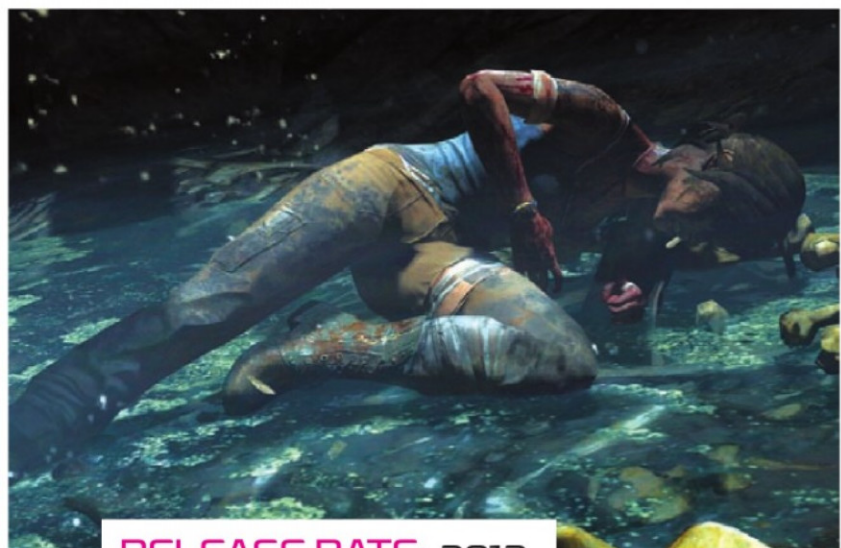
SoulCalibur V is being developed by Project Soul. Check out www.soulcalibur.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Another entry in a classic series? Yeah, okay then.
- ❑ Changes to the combat system should serve to keep things fresh.
- ❑ Project Soul has reformed especially to bring us more of what we want.
- ❑ More *SoulCalibur* = more chance of seeing Voldo again. The big mentalist.

READ ME

It was revealed that at one point *SoulCalibur V* was all set to be called *Soul Edge 2*. PSone fans will understand why this is worth mentioning.



RELEASE DATE: 2012

Camera work will play a pivotal role in *Tomb Raider*.

Tomb Raider

Hope I don't die, before I get old

PS3

Why is Lara upside-down?

Because she... wait, how do you know she's upside-down?

I don't. I'm merely serving as the non-existent interviewer asking pointed questions to prompt talk on certain game specifics.

In that case, it's a good job you asked. Young, 21-year-old Lara has embarked on her first adventure, which has seen her wind up in a mysterious cave, hanging upside-down, trapped in a bloodied bag of some sorts. It's more J-horror than *Tomb Raider*, the first sign of how vulnerable she is. She swings to a nearby torch which sets her bag on fire, burning away enough support that she falls to the ground where she's impaled on a spike, just above her hip. She screams as she tries to wrench the spike out of her body, the screen blurring and draining of colour as she does so.

Sounds grim.

It's strangely uncomfortable viewing and as Lara explores the cave, she's soon chased by a scruffy, faceless man grasping for her, shouting, "I only want to help you!" Crystal Dynamics shows us what happens if you stop, as he pulls out a hook and drives it through her chest.

Are you sure this is *Tomb Raider*?

Yes, it is. The tone is different with Lara no longer the brash, confident adventurer who can stroll into a cave and clear it out with gymnastic leaps and twin pistols. Yet despite that, the old elements are there, from physics-based puzzles to nimble platforming. There's also a sense of mystery as Lara emerges from the cave and looks out over a beach full of shipwrecked boats.

So how does Lara defend herself?

We're shown a later section where Lara has a bow on her back as she sets off to find a medi-pack and radio to tend to her wounded friend, Yorkshireman Roth (or "you Yorkshire bastard" as she calls him). Yet even when she tracks down the items and is set upon by a frenzied wolf, it's a manic QTE event that is called upon, not the bow. After screaming and trying to get away from the wolf, Lara eventually kills it with wild, panicked stabs of her knife before gasping, trying to regain her confidence and composure. "Lara doesn't kill if she doesn't have to," explains Crystal Dynamics. And that right there is the key difference between old *Tomb Raider* and new.

Tomb Raider is being developed by Crystal Dynamics. Check out the latest developments at www.tombraider.com



Environments are both atmospheric and creepy.



OPEN PLAN

What's a good game without a hub these days?

ALTHOUGH *TOMB RAIDER* is a linear game, Crystal Dynamics has tried to keep it feeling open. You'll discover and be directed through several hubs during the game, such as the campfire where the injured Roth rests up, but the areas will offer the scope and breadth to find your own way there. Using this method Crystal Dynamics remains in control of the narrative flow while still making the player feel they're part of a larger world and story.



Puzzles are more physics-based than contraption-based.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

It's not a big, fat *Uncharted* rip-off and actually feels entirely original.

It's cinematic without resorting to QTEs or cut-scenes.

There's a real sense of danger and tension when you're playing.

As tends to be the norm these days, it looks absolutely beautiful.

READ ME

In earlier *Tomb Raider* games the event that turned Lara into a heroine was a plane crash in the Himalayas. Here she suffers a boat wreck on a Japanese island.

PREVIEW

FAQ



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

• A bundle package of the game will be released, including two Move controllers, the Sharp Shooter peripheral and a PlayStation Eye.

Resistance 3

Insomniac's pièce de résistance

PS3 So, *Resistance 3*. Tell me why I should care. Well... erm...

Sounds like you're having a bit of trouble there.

We are. *Resistance 3* has some tough competition in the FPS field, with *Battlefield 3*, *Modern Warfare 3* and *BioShock: Infinite* of such impressive quality that *Resistance 3* has kind of faded into the background.

This is PS3's flagship shooter, you must have something to say about it. Well there's stuff to say about it, it's just not going to be as full of glorious praise as it would be if we were discussing those other titles. *Resistance 3* feels like the kind of game we're seeing less of with every year – the single-A title that doesn't have the grunt to compete with the brute force of triple-A giants like *Call Of Duty*.

Is it really that bad, though?

It's not bad, it just fails to impress. But *Resistance 3* has enjoyed a three-year development cycle and you can see a lot of work has been completed in that time. The demo shown at E3 sees Joseph Capelli fight through the streets of St Louis, Missouri, with Chimeran dropships spiralling from the air and crashing hard into the earth, while the demo's pièce de

résistance – a huge insectoid enemy – shows that Insomniac is still pulling no punches when it comes to delivering on huge enemy encounters.

But what changes has Insomniac made since *Resistance 2*?

The weapon wheel is back so you can now carry more than two weapons. There are new weapons such as the Mutator, which fires a biological mist that causes Chimera to explode, while many weapons are more makeshift to stay in line with *Resistance 3*'s survival theme. Frag grenades, for instance, are constructed out of bean cans filled with nails.

It sounds pretty good...

It sounds good, but not great. There's no doubt that in terms of quality *Resistance 3* will be overshadowed by the triple-A titles released at the end of the year.

Resistance 3 is being developed by Insomniac Games. For more details check out www.insomniacgames.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The weapon wheel returns, meaning you can carry more than two weapons.
- The multiplayer mode has been scaled back to make it feel more intimate.
- It's going to support both PlayStation Move and 3D.
- The high level of action from *Resistance 2* has been retained.



• Looks like Ethan Mars has wandered into the wrong game here.



• Those metallic trousers must be a pain for the Chimera when they need the loo.

BATTLEFIELD EARTH

Resistance 3 tightens and expands its multiplayer **AS MAG PROVED**, bigger doesn't always mean better when it comes to online gaming. It's something Insomniac has taken on board, reducing the player count of its multiplayer from 60 to 16. The eight-on-eight matches promise to be more intimate and also more customisable, with *COD*-esque abilities unlocked using XP. These can take the form of passive abilities and stat buffs to active abilities. The multiplayer matches will take place in a variety of locations, the intention being to illustrate the fact that *Resistance 3*'s battle isn't just occurring in the US; this alien occupation is taking place on a global scale.

READ ME

Four years after *Resistance 2* the US has been lost to the Chimera. Playing as dishonourably discharged sentinel Joseph Capelli you must travel from Oklahoma to New York City in the hope of taking it back.



MEET THE MISFITS

Overstrike is a four-player co-op shooter in which you play as the kind-of-elite-but-not-really Overstrike 9. These four characters are the black sheep of their organisation – a ragtag band of reformed crooks and renegades whose disregard for protocol when out in the field usually results in unacceptable levels of collateral damage. However, when a shadowy force attempts to wipe out humankind, Overstrike 9 is the only team with the balls to do what's necessary. You'll play as Dalton Brooks – a scarred and incessantly hungover-looking mercenary; the mischievous thief Naya Deveraux; the rebellious but gifted scientist Isabelle Sinclair; and the decorated detective with a bitter temper, Jacob Kimble.

FRINGE TECH

Exotic weaponry has always been Insomniac's thing. From the weird and wacky arsenal of *Ratchet & Clank* to the more realistic but still unconventional firearms of *Resistance*, Insomniac wants its players to do more than just point and shoot. *Overstrike* falls somewhere in the middle. Brooks uses what looks like a cross between a riot shield and an energy shield – able to not only deflect bullets, but also hold them in the air and fire them back. Deveraux has an invisibility cloak and Kimble an electrical crossbow, while Sinclair uses a foam gun that fires gelatinous blobs at enemies that swell and hold them in place – kind of like in *The Incredibles*.

RELEASE DATE: 2012

Overstrike

Insomniac strikes out in a new direction



TEAM PLAYER

We don't know much about how *Overstrike* will play other than that it will involve four-player co-op action. The trailer that has been released so far features only pre-rendered CGI, but from it we can make some educated guesses. For instance, it looks like the weapons and tools carried by the team can be combined to get more powerful results. One scene sees Sinclair incapacitate a foe with her sticky foam gun and Kimble use an electrified bolt to cause it to explode. We assume that, like *Borderlands*, each character will also have specific skills that must be exploited to progress. Deveraux, for instance, seems like a lighter, swifter and stealthier character – useful for getting in under the radar.



Let's do a quick bit of maths... according to our brilliant brains Insomniac releases a new IP every three and a half years or so, and it tends to stick to its guns. There have been seven *Ratchet & Clank* games (with another due in October), and there's a third *Resistance* game on the way. It's a pity, as there's a lot of

creativity at Insomniac. We've always wanted the developer to try out more new concepts.

We were happy to see *Overstrike* announced, then; a new IP, new characters and new ideas. What will Insomniac bring to the co-op genre? We'll have to wait and see.

Overstrike is being developed by Insomniac. Visit www.insomniacgames.com for more info.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's part *Resistance*, part *Ratchet & Clank*.
- The weapons promise to be creative and different.
- The voice-acting and writing is genuinely humorous.
- Naya Deveraux is pretty damn hot.

READ ME

You play as Overstrike 9, a reckless squad who are tasked with saving the world using a range of exotic weaponry and fringe tech.

PREVIEW

 London's calling

Ryu Hayabusa is heading to Blighty

The first mission top ninja Ryu Hayabusa is sent on during *Ninja Gaiden III* is to prevent a terrorist cell in London infiltrating the Prime Minister's residence. The backstreets of the capital serve as an early arena for combat, full of heavily armed British thugs, spouting cockney drool and generally looking like they're ready for a good stabbing. Sightseers will welcome some of the finer landmarks featured as you scale rooftops, fight through the deserted streets and appreciate the rather generic interpretation of our fair city.

RELEASE DATE: EARLY 2012

Ninja Gaiden III

 Ryu Hayabusa steps out of the shadows

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

-  Fast-paced, blood-soaked, stabby-stabby combat that'll leave you panting.
-  A more focused storyline that'll take Ryu across the world on a manhunt.
-  A more accessible game for people who don't like ripping their hair out.
-  The familiar sights of London just with more blood on it.

READ ME

Weirdly, it's not the first *Ninja Gaiden III*, as *Ninja Gaiden III: The Ancient Ship Of Doom* was released on the NES way back in 1991.

 Slicely done

Knives for many occasions

Brutal melee combat makes up the brunt of the action. Furious light and heavy attacks culminate in cinematic finishes, spraying a liberal amount of the red stuff all over each battlefield. Ryu's throbbing cursed arm also serves as a weapon, unleashing multi-directional attacks that obliterate anyone stupid enough to try to take the masked stabbing machine on. The combat was a little light on subtlety and input, with no real correlation between the sequences of buttons and the resulting combos. Still, we just stabbed a guy in the face, hehehe.

 Ryu can use his trusty daggers in less lethal ways, namely scaling walls.

 Simpler times

Making life easier

A statement that is sure to get a whole cluster of knickers in a twist is that Team Ninja has aimed to make the game simpler. The slightly optimistic approach to appeal to a broader audience has *Gaiden III* containing more accessible controls and a difficulty that isn't 'ARGH! I'm Going To Throw You Out The Window!' Even on this lighter difficulty it'll still prove an ample challenge – a giant mech took Ryu right down to the red in our boss encounter. The hardcore need not worry, though, as there will still be a mode catered for them. The loons.

 We think he got the point.

FIRST LOOK

✓ One man army

Three become one

One of the fairer criticisms levied at the last instalment was the multiple playable characters that bogged down the proceedings – what good is having a badass ninja if you can't use him, eh? Team Ninja has focused *Ninja Gaiden III* squarely on the main attraction, focusing both the action and story on Ryu, as he goes on the hunt for a mysterious masked assassin. The identity of the ninja adversary? We don't have the foggiest. But there is no doubt that they'll have some sort of history with Ryu.

London terrorists: known for possessing giant robots.

✓ Stealth hazard

A non-sneaking ninja?

One thing that is lacking at this stage is any real element of stealth – a key ingredient to any ninja mix, surely? One section of the London stage had Ryu skulking around as smoke filled the streets rather inexplicably, taking down guards with much the same expertise as he did elsewhere. With no real stealth functions to speak of, it's a concerning area of neglect for a game that could potentially benefit from it hugely. Still, what good is stealth when you're fighting a giant, fire-breathing robot, eh?

Future Soldier is very cinematic, with lots of scripted animations making the experience feel more dynamic.

UPDATE

The demo ends with a thermobaric charge being used to take down two helicopters.

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2012

Ghost Recon: Future Soldier

Sadly not Universal Soldier: The Game

PS3 While watching *Future Soldier* in action it's hard not to be reminded of another game from the Tom Clancy catalogue – *Splinter Cell: Conviction*. Both contain brutal yet efficient stealth gameplay juxtaposed with moments of explosive action and cinematic in-engine cut-scenes.

It's a blend that's well suited to *Future Soldier*. The setting for the E3 demo is Nigeria, the sun-bleached shacks and construction yards quite removed from the beach and grey dockyard showcased last year. The action is similar, though – four soldiers kitted out with various

hi-tech gadgets and weaponry stalk through a shanty town, using augmented reality to mark targets, infrared to see inside houses and stealth camouflage to move undetected.

This is all achieved with four players, each controlling a different squad member and the team co-ordinating tactics in order to breach and clear small huts and take down unwary targets.

The co-op gameplay creates some questions – while one player is taking out enemies, are the others just sitting and waiting? How are all four players to be consistently entertained in a game that's as much about stealth as it is action?

We'll have to wait until next year to find out. For now, we're happy to report that *Future Soldier* looks impressive, with the new design choices unlikely to lose the *Ghost Recon* series any fans.

Ghost Recon: Future Soldier is being developed by Ubisoft. Find out more at www.ghostrecon.uk.ubi.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The hi-tech gadgets are awesome.
- The four-player co-op appears to work well.
- Weapon customisation is extremely deep.
- Stealth gameplay segues into action smoothly.

PREVIEW

DEV Q&A



RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City

Play speaks exclusively with producer Masachika Kawata

PS3

We featured *Operation Raccoon City* on our cover recently. What have you changed since then?

When we went to Captivate and saw how the games were played by players with no experience of the game, we got a lot of useful data, so that's always very valuable. That's contributed to the tuning we've done since. We always use those events as an opportunity to get new data and a fresh look at the game. We've also released info on the Biohazard mode, where you have to take the G-Virus back to secure it and there will be even more in the future.

How many times have you been asked why Slant Six is involved?

[laughs] 100! I think there's been some misunderstanding about Slant Six or some strange translations, but the thing about Slant Six is they know how to make a really fun shooter, that is why this game is becoming so unique and why Slant Six is so valuable to us.

What kind of mistranslations?

It's not so much mistranslation, but more of a misunderstanding of 'why do you need to go out the building' per se, 'why are you even doing this'? It's part of our global strategy to make different kinds of games, specifically games that are more appealing in the West where we don't have to worry so much about the core Japanese fan base. It's been something there has been a lot of trepidation about especially from hardcore Capcom fans, but we're really happy to show these games.

I have to ask – where did the names Bertha, Beltway, Vector and Spectre come from?

[laughs] One of the designers at Slant had a lot of crazy and interesting names and those are the ones we picked. There's also some special meaning in those names but we can't tell you what that is.

Operation Raccoon City is being developed by Slant Six Games. Check out www.capcom.co.jp/bhorc for details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ A new perspective on a classic series that's never been shown before.
- ❑ Slant Six knows a thing or two about how to make interesting shooters.
- ❑ This could be the beginning of a brand-new franchise all of its own.
- ❑ It's mostly all potential at the moment. *ORC* still needs some work.

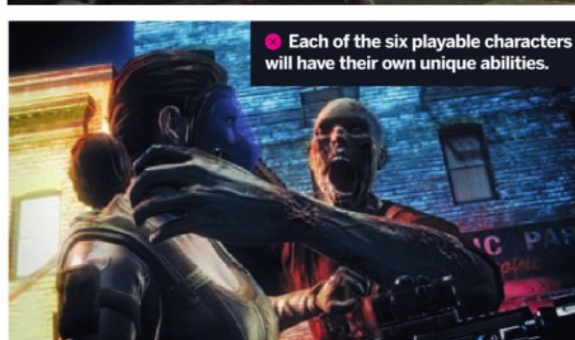
READ ME

Given that there's a new *Resi* movie on the way, too, there's every chance characters from this game will appear on the silver screen.

❖ Slant Six has experience working on a number of the *SOCOM* games on PlayStation.



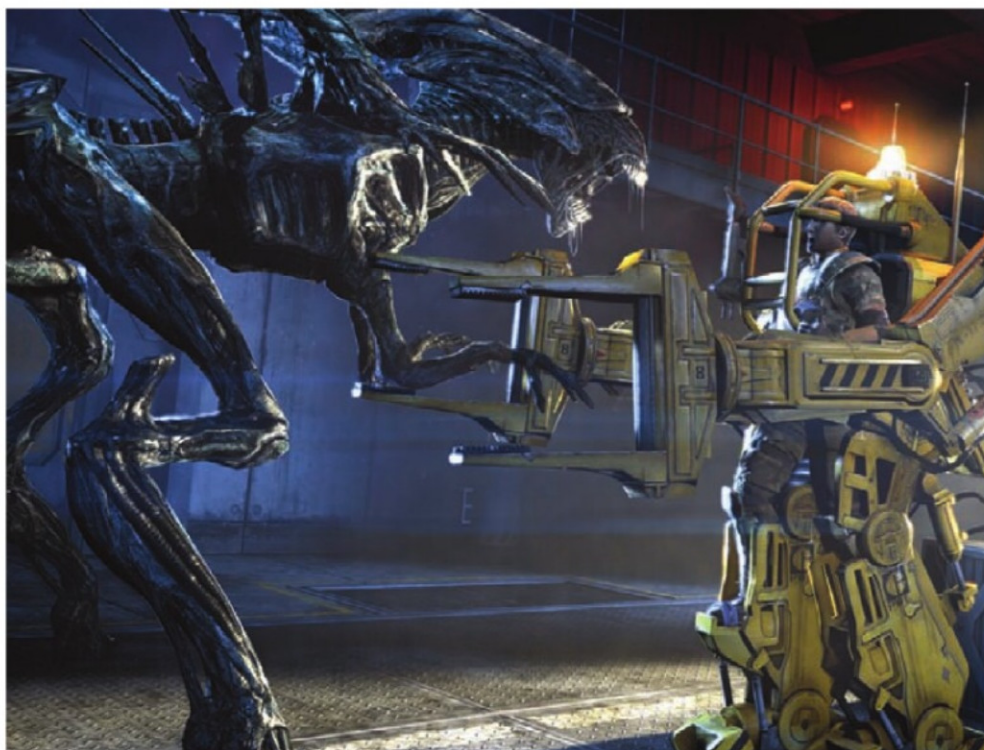
❖ Each of the six playable characters will have their own unique abilities.



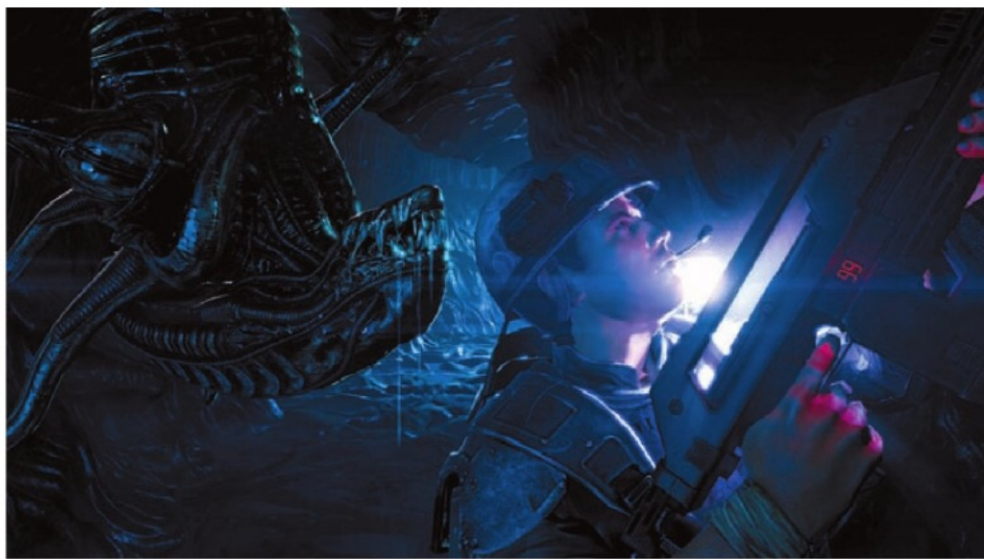
EAST/WEST UNITED

Capcom is still looking for Western team-ups

CAPCOM ALSO TOLD us that it will continue to work with Western developers in building and expanding its hit franchises, as they continue to appeal to a global audience outside of Japan. *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City*, *DmC: Devil May Cry* and *Dead Rising 2: Off The Record* are clearly all proof of this.



Co-op allows players to take on the roles of different marines.



The xenomorphs will be coming at you from all angles.

RELEASE DATE: SPRING 2012

Aliens: Colonial Marines

How do I get out of this chickenshit outfit?



We've got a massive interview with Gearbox Software next issue on

Aliens: Colonial Marines but for now, art director Brian Cozzens answers our key questions. Sorry for the quick intro but his words are more important than ours, right?

SO WHERE HAS IT BEEN?

The press release was 'premature' and Wikipedia was incorrect "A lot of people mentioned the *Game Informer* article we did a while back," explains Cozzens. "That was a prototype, you saw. Since then, we've been exploring our options with the game. We've recently just ramped our team up for production and that's where we're at."

Wikipedia says it was delayed following lay-offs in 2008. Correct? "No no no," answers Cozzens. That'll be a definite no, then. "We put the press release out a little prematurely. But we were all so excited, we wanted to tell the world. Because the franchise is so complex and we want to do it justice, we wanted to spend our time prototyping, investigating and exploring all our options to make something that was really true to the experience from the films."

ALIENS SEQUEL

Unused bits of the film will appear "Syd Mead did a lot of concept art for scenes that were never shown in *Aliens*, like the showers and other parts of the mess hall you didn't see," continues Cozzens. "They kicked all that stuff over

to us along with set photos. Cameron ended up using a lot of the ideas that they put on the table. But I would probably say the content we've got from Fox is probably about 20 to 30 per cent of areas that the fans never got to see that they never got to shoot for the film. It's not a huge percentage but it's enough that fans will be like, 'oh my god, I never got to see showers of Sulaco' but that was something that was designed by Syd Mead that we never got to see."

NEW ALIENS

New xenomorph, the huge Crusher, rams you with its head "Obviously for the time we've been prototyping, it became obvious we couldn't rely on just one xenomorph type, right?" starts Cozzens. "That would get old. Each film has its own type of xenomorph type. We have the scout in *Alien*, the dog-like xenomorph that's in *Aliens 3*, and so on. But we couldn't have just one xeno type, so we had to acknowledge that we were going to have to explore other xenomorph options. So the Crusher is a preview of what's to come. We're pretty proud of the Crusher but we want to lean even further with that while remaining true to the franchise."

WELDING DOORS

Huge gameplay feature confirmed "Yes!" laughs Cozzens when we ask him if you can weld doors. "There will be welding. We've spent an enormous amount of time on those effects."

Aliens: Colonial Marines is being developed by Gearbox Software. Check out www.gearboxsoftware.com/games/aliens for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's a sequel to *Aliens*. That is all.
- If you don't appreciate it we're disappointed in you.
- No, really, you won't get any more reasons here.
- Though we do really hope we're not wrong about it.

READ ME

Aaron Asadi, **Play** editor-in-chief, claims *Aliens* isn't all that. Aaron Asadi, **Play** editor-in-chief, is clearly wrong. What's that? 'Sacked'? Oh well. Worth it.

PREVIEW



1

MADE BY
SINGSTAR FANS?

IO intends to make *Absolution* more welcoming to newcomers, as previous entries to the series have tended to put a lot of people off, owing to their 'hardcore' nature. We don't disagree – *Hitman* games have often been punishing, and require thought beyond 'go in room: kill everyone'.

Which is why *SingStar* fans are now shaping the franchise. "We do a lot of user research where we bring in hardcore *Hitman* fans and people who play third-person games and even *SingStar* fans to see how people react to the game," said game director Tore Blystad. *SingStar* fans. *Hitman*. *SingStar* fans. *Hitman*. Someone draw a Venn diagram for us, please. We don't understand.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

Hitman:
AbsolutionSet excitement levels to
'EXCITED'. Though concerned

PS3

The return of Agent 47 – a man who has been missing from PlayStation since 2006's *Blood Money* (and who has never made an appearance on PS3) – is truly something to get excited about. Skulking about in the shadows, waiting to throw a stiletto through the back of a drug dealer's head isn't exactly something we've been doing a lot of for the last five years. We miss it. Thankfully IO is bringing Agent 47 and his hitmanish ways back to the gaming fold.

We've heard rumblings and smatterings of detail that *Absolution* will be a familiar experience for fans of the series, while at the same time it will open up the title to newcomers. Apparently. This fills us with hope. Hope, tinged with fear. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.



2

SLOOOOW MOTION

The E3 demo indicated a stronger emphasis on a cinematic experience. In the grand tradition of *Garth Marengi's Darkplace* this translates to: a lot of slow motion. "We wanted to bring the cinematic experience into the gameplay and bringing the

story closer to the player," continues Blystad, "rather than being this convoluted story that didn't have any connections. We wanted a much tighter experience while keeping all the choices of the old games, which has been a big task for us."

WHAT MAKES THIS
GAME GREAT?

- The main thing making it great is: IT'S *HITMAN*.
- Stealth, tactics, planning and an open approach. Hopefully.
- Another thing making it great is: IT'S NOT *KANE & LYNCH*.
- It's a very, very purdy game indeed.

READ ME

IO Interactive also created *Freedom Fighters*. We wouldn't be doing our duty if we didn't mention *Freedom Fighters* at every given opportunity. It was brilliant.

FREQUENTLY USED KILLINGS

How many ways shall I murder thee?



● Shall I shoot thee in the back, uncouth and unsubtle as it is?



● Shall I put thee to sleep, whispering sweet nothings in thy ear?

3

USE YOUR INSTINCT

A new feature that has some *Hitman* purists up in arms is Agent 47's new 'Instinct' power. With this, he will be able to see his targets wandering around an area thanks to a yellow aura around them, while their patrol path will also be marked out on the floor by flames. It's a planning aid, basically, so you know when and where to strike.

Yes, it simplifies things a fair bit, but in previous *Hitman* games you could always see their movements anyway – just on the map screen. It saves a bit of time, which is a good thing. Plus, if you really don't want to use the feature, you can likely just turn it off.



4

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

The best thing about the *Hitman* series is the openness with which players can approach situations, and *Absolution* doesn't look to buck that particular trend. In the demo we saw cops were attacked with electrical wires, a large bust (stop laughing) and a bong – among other things.

One cute touch in the demo was disguised Agent 47 staring at a machine gun while being questioned on who he was, before reaching towards the gun and... grabbing a donut next to it. Oh, IO. You guys! The level IO showed us could well be a tutorial in the vein of *Blood Money*'s opener, but there was still a new focus on direct action over trademark subtlety and cover fire over improvised weapons.

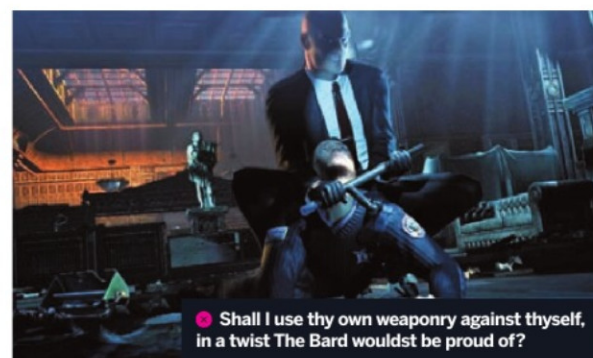
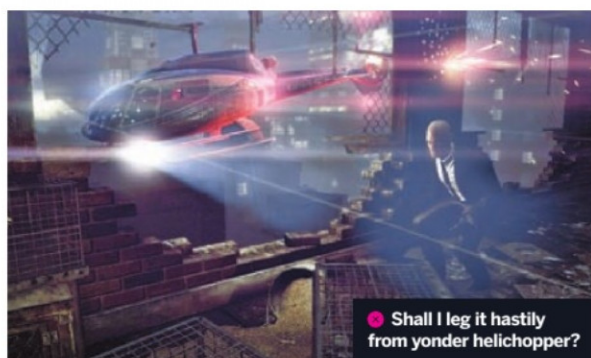


STAYING STATESIDE

One interesting element – to us, at least – is the apparent fact that *Absolution* will only be set in the US. Now, *Blood Money* covered Agent 47's arrival into the US, but it still had missions across the globe.

This – apparent – new angle means we will no longer be the globe-trotting baldy assassin going to whack people at their luxury Chilean mansions. Or wherever else we might want to whack them. No, this will all be – apparently – US-based. No bad thing in its own right, and IO is sure to do a good job of infusing each location with individuality and personality. But still, we're being petulant.

5



PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

FIFA 12

Footy gets physical

PS3

Let's skip to the end; is *FIFA* still better than *PES*?

There's no doubt that *PES* has seen some major improvements this year, but *FIFA 12* boldly boasts what lead producer David Rutter is calling the "trinity of innovations", consisting of a completely overhauled impact engine, precision dribbling and tactical defending.

"Trinity of innovations"?

Football's football, surely?

Weird buzzwords aside, the new features are genuinely interesting. The game's new impact engine allows for a much greater level of detail and finesse. Previous issues such as body parts intersecting and unexpected collisions breaking the flow of play are no more. The new engine also allows every part of a player's body to be monitored individually, providing accurate feedback on an injury. In short, the new impact engine provides true physicality and a focus on accuracy and fluidity throughout a match. In our hands-on with the game there was something pleasantly unfamiliar and exciting about how *FIFA 12* plays.

How about dribbling, what can we expect there?

Over the years we've seen major improvements to dribbling, with

FIFA 10 providing 360 degrees of ball control. *FIFA 12* takes this a step further with what Rutter dubs "precision dribbling". The game allows you to gently tap the ball around with small movements, giving you the opportunity to better explore the pitch in congested areas. You can also now move slightly when shielding the ball, allowing you to relieve pressure with the turn of the left stick. We found this allows the player to deploy strategy within a match. Attackers really feel like they're trying to break down your defence and there's a sense of real pressure as other players attempt to steal possession.

What's the third feature?

A new defending mechanic has also been introduced. The previous mindless chasing of the ball and player is no more and instead all defending is achieved through a press of the 'contain' button. This maintains your distance from the ball, allowing you to mark an attacking player, analyse the situation and remove opportunity.

How about the AI? Can we finally expect some real competition?

Don't get too cocky; *FIFA 12* is out to challenge even the best players with its new pro player intelligence. This next-generation AI allows the CPU to capitalise on the specialties of



EA is working hard to improve *FIFA*'s realism, with enhanced dribbling and defending on the menu for *FIFA 12*.

players in its team. For example, if the enemy team has Peter Crouch, they'll know to play off of his altitudinal noggin. The AI also now has a vision attribute, meaning they can only play to what's in their field of view.

Of all the "trinities of innovations" I've heard about, this one sounds the best.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A "trinity of innovations" make this one of the biggest leaps in the *FIFA* series to date.
- It's got a brand-spanking-new impact engine allowing for the most realistic collisions yet.

- It has built on the 360-degrees dribbling first introduced in *FIFA 10* and offers more refined and precise movement.
- Teased multiplayer features that will blow previous games in the series out of the water.

OUCH!

Tackling will be more visceral than ever this year...

MAKING TACKLING MORE accurate and real has been a major focus for the EA Canada team this year, with every part of the body being tracked to provide accurate feedback on incurred injuries.

What else has seen improvements?

The game's menus have received a lick of paint and the game's overall look and feel has been improved with new cinematic in-game camera angles, better lighting and smoother gameplay.

FIFA 12 is being developed by EA Canada. Check out www.ea.com/uk/football/fifa for more details.

READ ME

FIFA 12 will also be released on both the Nintendo 3DS and the Vita, making it the first football game to grace Sony's latest handheld device.



RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

PES 2012

Now there is AI in team



Is PES going to take on FIFA this year?

FIFA is looking strong, but it's taking risks. This could be PES's year if some of what it's introducing really brings PES together and makes it feel more consistent.

marking will be much tighter and zonal defenders should also react quicker. Konami wants there to be much more one-on-one situations between attackers and defenders.

One-on-one? Like dribbling around someone?

Exactly. Konami thinks one-on-ones are some of the most exciting moments in football, but not just for the attacker. It's also a genuine test of a defender's reactions. Can you hold up this forward long enough for your players to get back and support you? That's the challenge PES 2012 will be setting you.

What about that passing though? That was a disaster last year.

Konami has had nothing to say on that yet, but we'd imagine it will be spending time trying to make the passing system more intuitive. That would certainly make sense given the new kinds of movement you'll have all around you on the pitch.

PES 2012 is being developed by Konami. For more information about this year's iteration check out pesfan.com



TOO MUCH PES?

Is Konami still making too many versions of Pro Evo?

YET AGAIN KONAMI is making PES not only for PS3, Xbox 360 and PC, but also for PSP, Wii and PS2. And who knows what other new formats it may suddenly decide to add in the coming months? We've always suspected that making so many PES games was drawing strength away from the main PS3 game and if that's so then we could have the same problems again this year.



So what's the big new improvement this year?

Put simply, the AI. We'll be seeing much smarter and more realistic movement with and without the ball. Team-mates will now start making moves before your player gets the ball. Midfielders and full backs will overlap on the wings to give you more passing options. Attacking players will move into space for a pass, but also to create space. PES 2012 wants to get away from skilled players being the only ones who can break down a defence so that good teamwork can have an impact, too.

What about the horror show defending from last year?

The PES team hopes to have addressed some of that too thanks to some AI changes. Man

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Promises to be another big leap in the right direction for the PES franchise.
- ❑ A guild-type system has been hinted at for online multiplayer.
- ❑ Expect improvements and tweaks to fan-favourites like Master League.
- ❑ With FIFA entering a new experimental phase, PES could come into its own.

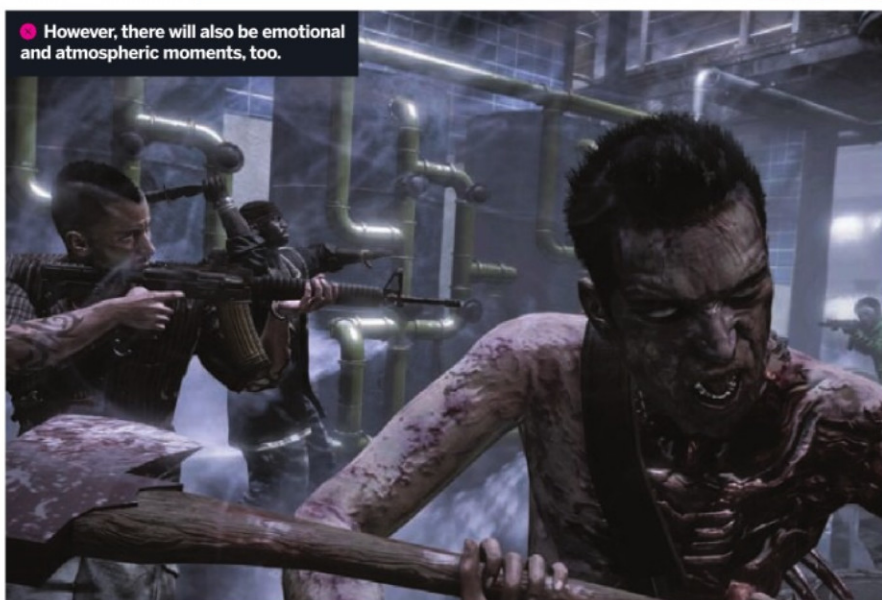
READ ME

PES 2012 is being developed for every format under the sun, including the PS2, meaning *WWE All Stars* won't be the last game on that console.



It's going to be gory, so expect to see plenty of blood in *Dead Island*.

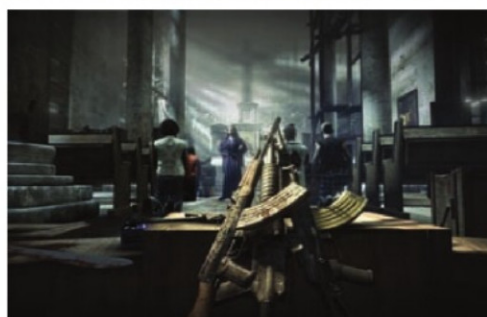
However, there will also be emotional and atmospheric moments, too.



CHURCH MATTERS

The calm before the storm

AS YOU CAN see here, a church is being used as a base of operations by survivors. It's here that you'll be able to stock up on ammo and buy guns from a vendor trying to make a quick buck despite the zombie apocalypse outside. It's also a place of serenity and peace that recaptures a little bit of the mood created by the first trailer.



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Dead Island

Mo' zombies, mo' zombies, mo' zombies

PS3

You've probably seen 'that' trailer by now, the reversing-time one with the dead girl and the slow retelling of how she got to be that way. It ignited a storm around *Dead Island* that perhaps the developers didn't anticipate, because when you actually get stuck into the game, it's obviously not like that. It's far more traditional – lots of chopping limbs, blood flying all over the place and good old B-movie action.

And yet there will be moments echoing the emotional impact of that first trailer in-between the carnage. A base area set in a church provides some relief, where you can do all the usual things you'd expect from a base – buy guns, tweak guns, chat to other survivors, electrify your machete and so on.

Choosing to venture out into the zombie-strewn world gives you, as one of a variety of characters you can choose from, the chance to engage in melee combat-focused fights with the undead, along with chums who might drop-in (and drop-out) of the co-op mode at will.

Experience points and levelling up infests every game nowadays, and *Dead*

Island will be no different, with new abilities available as you progress. Each character has a different set of upgrades to aim for, which is a nice touch.

So *Dead Island's* gameplay looks to be a mishmash of things we've seen many times before, which some may see as disappointing after the initial hype of the first trailer. Still, once you've got over this, considered that although it's not going to change the world, it does look like it could be a lot of fun. Throwing machetes into zombie faces, *Duke Nukem*-style big boots, a quite ridiculous amount of blood being sprayed everywhere, wonderfully colourful visuals and a relatively unique setting – all of these things and more make *Dead Island* one to look out for.

It might be more *Left 4 Dead* than *Resident Evil* (the first one) and it's not going to break new ground, but since when did that stop us having a good time? And remember: machetes thrown into zombie faces. That alone is exciting us here at **Play**.

Dead Island is being published by Deep Silver and developed by Techland. Check out www.techland.pl for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It has loads and loads of buckets of blood and gore.
- It has some solemn, atmospheric scenes.
- Did we mention machetes thrown into zombie faces?
- Four-player drop-in, drop-out co-op multiplayer.

READ ME

Dead Island is primarily focused on using hand-to-hand weapons rather than guns. Bullets and guns are scarce and expensive, as you'd imagine given that it's set on a holiday island.

UPDATE



TAPPED IN

The second mission we were shown introduces the Blackwatch comm network, a system used to relay info to troops and store intel. Heller can find these comm vehicles and hack them, which will in turn reveal priority targets. Heller is directed to a Blackwatch operative nearby, and sends out a green sonar pulse to identify his exact position. In absorbing him and acquiring his memories Heller is given a new mission – destroy two APCs. Heller leaps, bounds and glides to this new objective with a fluidity that looks almost effortless. Once at the APCs Heller tears a rocket turret from one, leaping into the air and using it to fire down at both vehicles in an insane display of pyrotechnics. The player earns a new mutation for completing the mission, which here grants an upgraded air dash. Mutations in *Prototype 2* will act more like perks, with players able to tailor custom loadouts to their own play style.

WE'RE GOING TO NEED A BIGGER BLADE

Prototype 2 is dotted with hidden Lairs full of collectables. During our demo Heller finds one bubbling up through the tarmac. He rips it open and jumps down below, entering what looks like an underground car park populated with zombie-like citizens. Using his scythe arms he chops them limb from limb, finishing off the final brute by slicing it right down the middle. Back up above ground Heller encounters a huge enemy named... 'Tiny'. He has one arm that he uses as a bulldozer scoop and runs down the block after Heller destroying everything in his path. Just as things are about to get interesting... the demo ends. Roll on 2012.



RELEASE DATE: 2012

Prototype 2

Poor Manhattan just can't catch a break...

PS3

Radical Entertainment believes two guys summed up the philosophy behind the original *Prototype* better than any employee at the studio ever could, and those two guys were the people behind Penny Arcade. The strip that impressed Radical so much can be seen at <http://bit.ly/dkC4e>, Gabe answering the question "Should I buy *Prototype*" with the rather succinct response, "In *Prototype*, you can do a karate kick on a helicopter. What the f**k more do you want?"

But the question now facing Radical is how to make people buy *Prototype 2*? How can they better a formula that allowed you to roundhouse an AH-64 Apache? By making everything even bigger and better than before. We took a look at a vertical slice of Heller's adventures in the newly named New York Zero to find out exactly how Radical is going about achieving such a daunting mission statement.

Prototype 2 is being developed by Radical Entertainment. Check the website for more details: www.radical.ca



BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

The first mission we were shown takes place in the Green Zone of NYZ – relatively free of infection and the site of the sinister Blackwatch's HQ. The PMC's soldiers have cordoned off an area where there lies the corpse of some new breed of mutant, and after the growing crowds fail to disperse the troops gun them down in a display of brutal oppression. Heller watches from a nearby rooftop and silently shapeshifts into the form of a Blackwatch operative himself. Stealthily walking up to the gathered guards he swiftly plants a 'Biobomb' on one, the PMC writhing and convulsing and then, finally, exploding in a bloody mess, taking out the other enemies as he does so. Heller uses the resulting confusion to absorb a nearby scientist, learning through the acquired memories that Blackwatch intends to control and tailor the Blacklight virus to its own devious ends.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Heller's new powers are satisfying and empowering.
- The enemies are much bigger and tougher.
- There's a lot more to do in the game world.
- You can kill Blackwatch troops using the Biobomb.

READ ME

When Heller isn't killing Blacklight ops he utilises his powers as a part-time cook. Okay, we made that up but he'd be well good at dicing things, no?

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Twisted Metal

Just like our opinion, it's all gone a bit twisted



We're officially worried. You know us and our love-hate-love relationship with the *Twisted Metal* series – but this time we've played it, and we're worried. On one hand we'd be right behind David Jaffe and co in demanding the game stay true to its roots, but when you play a game and it just feels decidedly *old*, like everything else around it has moved on so much and this is just stuck in a rut... well, it gets us worried.

Obviously it's still early days and what we played was unfinished –

and the game did manage to raise its fair share of exciting, fun moments. So we're not ready to write it off just yet. But there's no getting beyond the fact that, right now, from what we've been able to play, the thought of *Twisted Metal* getting a full, retail release later in the year isn't as exciting as it once was. We'll give it every chance we can come October, naturally, but work is needed to pull this one out of the bag.

Twisted Metal is being developed by Eat Sleep Play. Check out www.twistedmetal.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Not just cars – massive robots, too.
- ❑ We've always had a soft spot for *TM* titles.
- ❑ Proper multiplayer for a series that needs it.
- ❑ Once it's out David Jaffe may stop talking about it.

READ ME

Since *Twisted Metal* was announced in 2010, David Jaffe has Tweeted approximately 4.2 billion times. This may be a made-up figure, but it can't be far off.

GET TO IT

The 'it' in question being a chopper. Or a mech

Two elements that have been thrown up in and around preview coverage – and our time with the game – have been helicopters and mechs. The latter so much (mech Sweet Tooth vs giant mech Iron Maiden, for example) that it had to be clarified the game is indeed car combat at heart. It's interesting to see new vehicle types thrown into the mix and could add a wealth of new strategic approaches to combat. Well, that or it could just be a bit pump. Regardless, it's undeniably exciting to fly around in a chopper, dogfighting with other pilots or strafing the poor buggers on the ground. We're clueless as to any other non-car/bike vehicles right now, though.

GUNS FOR SHOW

Super weapons and character-specific attacks for a pro

Vehicles in multiplayer are based on classic *Twisted Metal* characters and have their own array of strengths and weaknesses. The Sweet Tooth truck, for example, inflicts massive damage when ramming and has a strong defence, but is horribly slow-moving. The Reaper bike, on the other hand, is lighter, quicker, but easier to flip and weaker. It's not hard to figure out these archetypes, really. These base characters are backed up with a ton of weapons and some funny special attacks, like the Junkyard Dog ability to lob cars it is towing as projectiles (while passengers still sat inside), or Reaper's flaming chainsaw attack, which... well, it's a flaming chainsaw. Certainly some fun ideas on show.

IN A NUTSHELL

What does it play like? Really?

We played part of the multiplayer portion of *Twisted Metal*, and it left us feeling quite cold. A simple deathmatch with a basic XP progression system, awarding bonus points for landing hits – more points for stronger weapons or weapons it's harder to hit with... nothing you wouldn't expect, really. Aesthetically we didn't see anything

to really blow us away, and in fact the whole game has a feel that it just doesn't look that great. Well, it has a *look* that it doesn't look too great. You get the point. This is one of the main negatives we encountered about *Twisted Metal*: it's just so basic and doesn't go beyond anything much we've seen before. It's certainly not a showcase title.

IN-DEPTH

LONELINESS

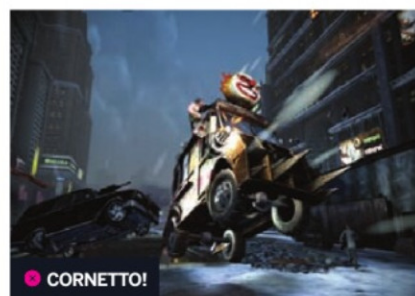
You can play it on your own, too!

We're still yet to see anything much from the single-player side of things, though we're assured (through constant, incessant Tweeting) that there will be a robust campaign mode, with all the stories we've come to know and love over the years. Well, some of us came to love them. Maybe. As *Twisted Metal* – that's as in this version, not the series in general – originally started out as a multiplayer-only game, we're wondering just how well single-player stacks up. It's all a bit confusing, both what we know about the game and how we actually feel about it. Still, as long as Calypso is still delightfully mental and the 'twisted' (ho ho!) wishes are granted, we'll be happy.

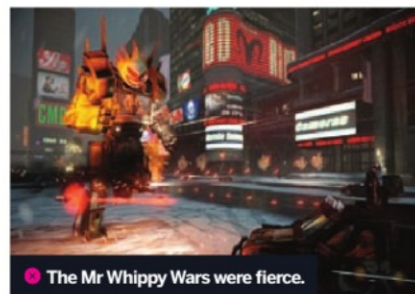


SWEET (TOOTH)

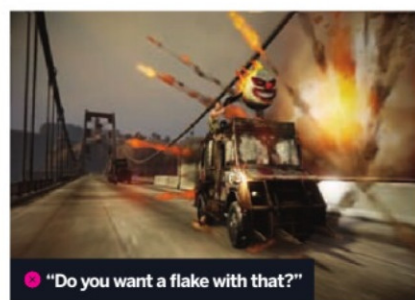
The iconic ice cream bastard is back in *Twisted Metal*, so LET'S LOOK AT HIM



● CORNETTO!



● The Mr Whippy Wars were fierce.



● "Do you want a flake with that?"

UPDATE



RELEASE DATE: 15 NOVEMBER

Assassin's Creed: Revelations

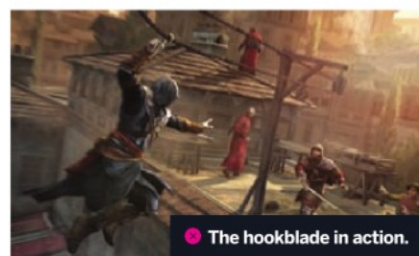
In which the story complicates further

PS3 Desmond is in a coma, piecing together the fragments of his mind. Meanwhile, elsewhere in his partitioned brain, his ancestor Ezio keeps seeing flashbacks of Altair his ancestor. These seem to be leading Ezio somewhere... his quest takes him to the city of Constantinople (now Istanbul), which is where our demo started.

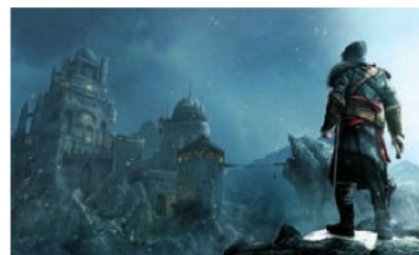
Ezio arrives to find the port blockaded by a mighty chain that's drawn across it. With the help of the local assassins led by Yusuf, Ezio uses one of 300 new bomb types to confuse the chain's defenders; a smoke bomb, which he can see through with his new Batman-vision.

He then uses a super-bomb to blow the chain and escapes, using his new hookblade to zipline across to a nearby galleon... only to find that his boat is blocked in by neighbouring ships. Thankfully, the galleon is equipped with a Greek Fire thrower, which he uses to set fire to the ships, before running across the burning wreckage to his ship.

With expanded multiplayer, Desmond's puzzle areas in the Black



● The hookblade in action.

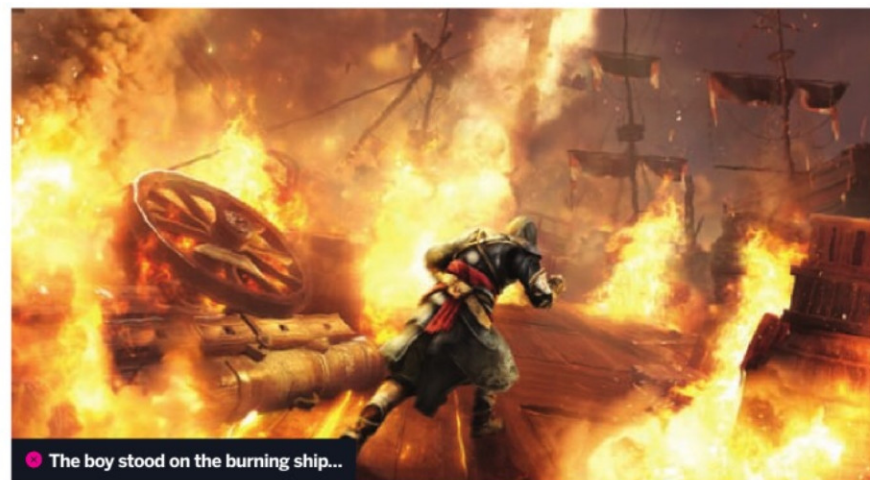


Room, Ezio's antics and possibly a return for Altair, *AC: R* promises to be either a challenging, exciting conclusion to the series or an incoherent mess with only arbitrary closure leading to yet another sequel. Only time (and Ubisoft's desire to drag the story out) will tell.

Revelations is being developed by a host of Ubisoft studios. Find out more at <http://assassinscreed.ubi.com/revelations/>

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The greatest city in the ancient world.
- Desmond's bizarre coma-based gameplay.
- The new hookblade travel/murder accessory.
- Story-oriented multiplayer.



● The boy stood on the burning ship...

PREVIEW

UPDATE



It's desolate, unwelcoming, but pretty.

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Dark Souls

Too tough even for the devs

PS3 Everybody talks up the difficulty level when it comes to *Dark Souls*, so much so that it becomes hard to think of something else to write about the game. But then when it turns out the devs have created a boss fight they themselves haven't yet managed to overcome – "*Dark Souls* is 120 per cent harder than *Demon's Souls*" said producer Kei Hirono – you know there's a good reason there's so much focus on the unrelenting desire to smack the crap out of the player. *It's that hard*.

But pure difficulty is never going to carry an experience alone, just as *Demon's Souls* proved. An innovative online system, smooth controls, gorgeous looks and endless replayability made for one of the best experiences on PS3. *Dark Souls* looks set to follow a very similar path to *Demon's Souls*. As the dev says, it's not just a difficult game – it's a unique one too.

Multiplayer features make up a big part of *Dark Souls*, but they are not absolutely necessary for progression. While it might be a bit

harder to take on some challenges on your tod, it is not impossible to progress on your own.

Another element being emphasised heavily is choice. This is not a free-roaming, open-world game. But there is significant choice throughout the experience, even if it is a simple case of choosing whether to go upstairs or downstairs. You go up, you might be greeted with a bunch of enemies you're not yet ready to defeat. So, you leg it down again, and it turns out down is a better place for you to go. Then what will you do? Why, you'll go back upstairs later and eff up for those once-hard bastards who forced you downstairs. The gits.

Don't be put off by a game that has an apparently undefeatable boss. *Dark Souls* is seeing constant tweaks to get things up to the level they should be: difficult, but never unfair. Punishing, but only when you mess up. And, most importantly: fun, but rarely welcoming.

Dark Souls is being developed by From Software. Check out www.fromsoftware.jp/darksouls for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

Dark Souls is pretty much *Demon's Souls* 2. Repeat ad nauseam.

We don't have to wait as long for the localisation this time.

Games are far too easy. So let's get some hard ones again.

Co-operative play is great, but you're not forced to play with others.

READ ME

It may still only be a 'spiritual successor' to *Demon's Souls*, but that doesn't stop us from being mildly thrilled about the existence of *Dark Souls*.



If it's anything like *Demon's Souls*, you should keep your shield up.



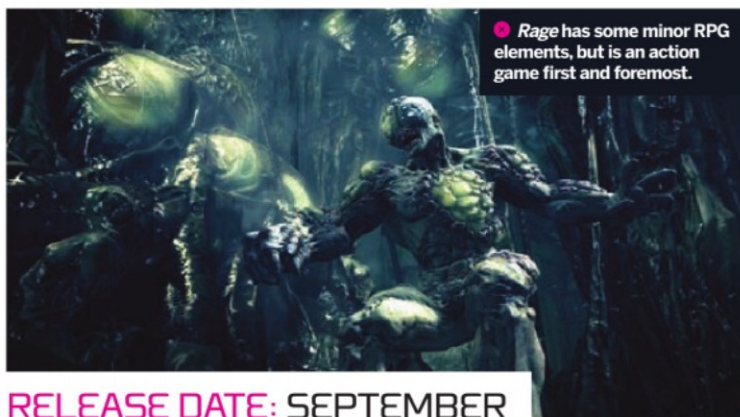
Boulder. BOULDER. Idiot.

GOT NO FRIENDS

Even in numbers, you're on your own

YOU MIGHT BE able to play *Dark Souls* with other people who you might consider friends, but you're quite mistaken if you think the game wants you to have any. The Iron Golem is a perfect example of this – a boss battle that even the devs have not been able to overcome. And it's wearing this as a badge of pride, gleefully showing the gaming press how little an effect they have against the big metal buggar. From wants you to feel achievement and progress. It doesn't want you to have friends, though.





● *Rage* has some minor RPG elements, but is an action game first and foremost.

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Rage

Anger mismanagement

PS3

We've previewed *Rage* many times before. And we've said what we're about to many times before. But it is really, *really* difficult to write about *Rage* without mentioning it. This. Game. Looks. Good.

What we haven't mentioned is how old-school it plays. Not in a *Duke Nukem Forever* kind of way but more in a PC FPS kind of way. You know,

back when the genre was about twitch reflexes, static environments and almost no story? Yeah. It's like that.

There's a relentless pace to the action, which tries to disguise its this-door-is-locked-until-those-enemies-are-dead mechanic but the bodycount runs so high, even after the doors are unlocked, we suspect *Rage* might also be bringing back respawning enemies. That gimmick



● We've already mentioned it in this preview, and we're going to do it again: visually this game is amazing.

ACTION

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

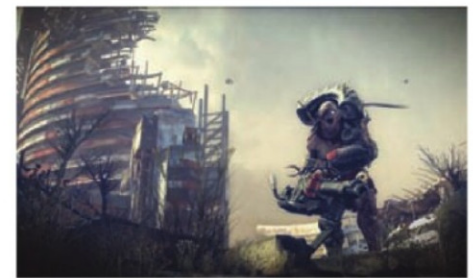
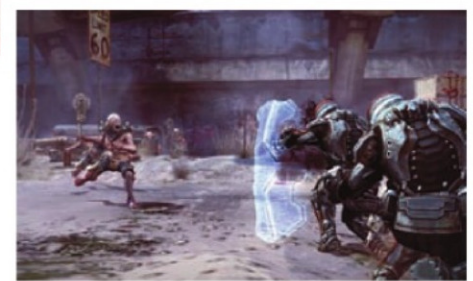
- It is without doubt one of the most detailed and sumptuous-looking games we've seen.
- There are many different ammo types and combat items to keep combat feeling varied.

- *Rage*'s driving sections are fast, fun and furious.
- The Authority Pulse Cannon looks a bit like *Predator*'s OI Painless.

died a death (ironically) after everyone moaned about it in the *Call Of Duty* series yet it makes a refreshing change to feel like that safety net has been taken away.

There are new flourishes in there, too, such as shielded enemies, but make no mistake. This has trademark id Software fingerprints all over it and it's a purist FPS for those reared on a diet of *Quake* and *Doom*. You know how some people tried to defend *Duke Nukem Forever* on the grounds of nostalgia? This is the game they should have planted that flag on.

Rage is being developed by id Software. Head over to the website to get more details: www.rage.com



RELEASE DATE: 2012

Metro: Last Light

Last light, first appearance on PS3

PS3

It's possible you never played *Metro 2033* – it never made its way to PS3. It's a great shame because it was one of 2010's better games. Set in a post-apocalyptic Russia it saw protagonist Artyom struggling for survival in the Moscow metro system, where the populace had been forced to take refuge from the toxic air above.

In this sequel Moscow's residents are still stuck and war continues to rage between the various stations' political factions. The demo plunges us straight back into the underground, commencing with a short bout of stealth gameplay – Artyom unscrews a light bulb and also shoots a kettle to tip it and extinguish a fire below, shrouding himself in darkness to sneak up on enemies undetected.

We soon find ourselves thrust into a meeting of the Nazi-like Red party. Our attempts to blend in are unsuccessful and a gunfight spills out onto rail tracks where a cart chase commences. It's a fast and dynamic sequence that showcases the meatier gunplay and destructible environments.

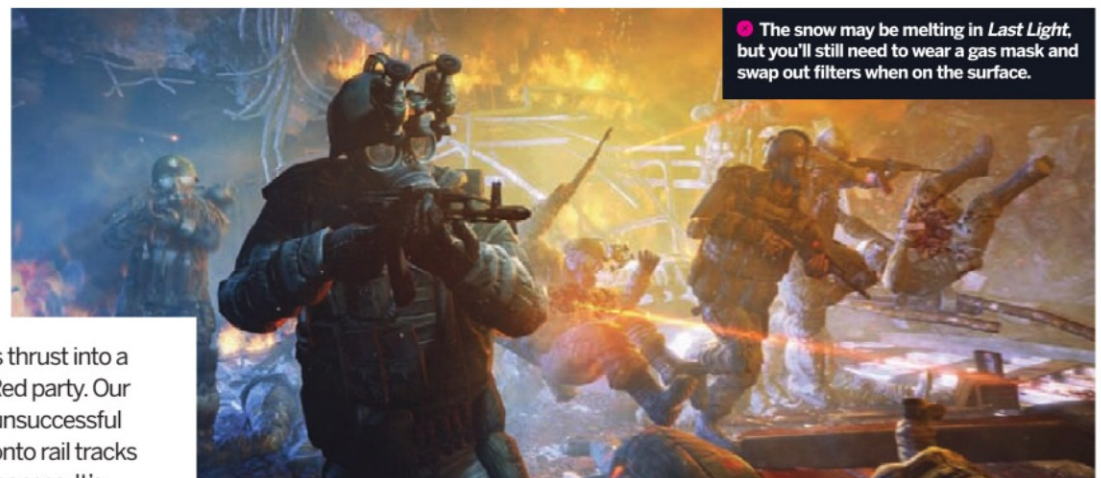
It's a shame we're shown such an action-based segment – the first game was at its best when quiet and creepy – but it does display many subtle improvements that make *Last Light* feel the more dynamic and exciting title. *Metro* deserves attention. It would be disappointing if this sequel were to end up another 'cult hit' (aka: a commercial flop).

Metro: Last Light is being published by THQ. Find out more at www.metro.thq.com

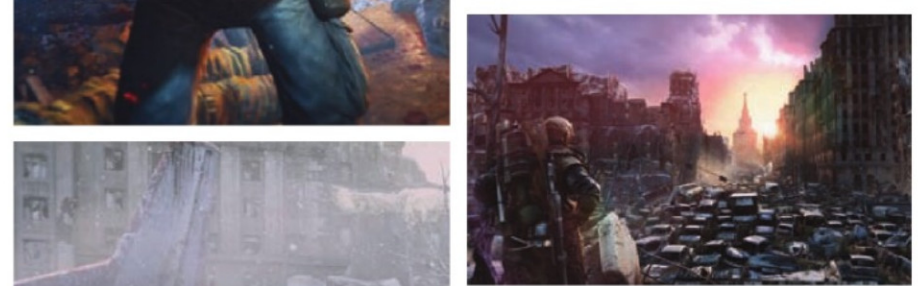
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It looks absolutely stunning, the lighting being particularly noteworthy.
- It still retains the heavy and dark atmosphere of the original game.

- There's more variety to the weapons this time around.
- The sequel will feature multiplayer, which was absent from the first game.



● The snow may be melting in *Last Light*, but you'll still need to wear a gas mask and swap out filters when on the surface.



● It's not yet known whether or not the 'bullets as currency' mechanic will return from the first game.

PREVIEW

My pet monster

If you can beat 'em, make 'em join you

When fighting – and defeating – monsters there is a chance the vanquished foe will be turned into a crystal. This item can then be used to make the monster fight on your side in battles, bringing with it unique buffs and abilities. So far we've seen a Flan ravager, a Behemoth commando and a some-kind-of-lizard-thing sentinel. We're very detail-oriented here, you see. It sounds very much like a simple addition that brings a good deal more depth.



Make it an event

Because there's always room for QTEs

They call it 'cinematic action', we're thinking of calling it 'a concession to Western gamers' or 'the great unbalancer'. Basically: quick-time events. From what we saw they were only used in boss battles, but the fact they were both simple and – when pulled off correctly – ended the fight did worry us somewhat when it comes to strategy in battles. If they're handled correctly, though, they could well add to the narrative elements of the game.

RELEASE DATE: WINTER 2011

Final Fantasy XIII-2

Boldly going where one naming convention has gone before



We never really expected to see a direct sequel to *Final Fantasy XIII*, what with the rather lukewarm reception it seemed to receive. Well, maybe not lukewarm, but there has been a lot of internet-bitching about it. Having said that, *Final Fantasy X* got itself a sequel of the direct variety and that one didn't seem to need it, so maybe Squenix is just good at playing with our expectations like this. Anyway, we've been promised *FFXIII-2* will

"exceed" its forebear "in every aspect", which has naturally pumped up our expectations.

We have seen a great deal that impresses us and a lot of things

A lot of things have definitely been changed for the better

have definitely been changed for the better, but there are still questions. Unfortunately, we will have to wait for the answers.

Final Fantasy XIII-2 is being developed by Square Enix. Visit www.finalfantasy13-2game.com for details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



FFXIII was on the cusp of greatness. This should be better.



Modifications to better an already-good battle system.



We're not shallow – WE'RE NOT – but it is very pretty.



It's linear, but less linear. If that makes sense at all.

READ ME

Moogles, making their return in *FFXIII-2*, have been in most *Final Fantasy* games since the third in the series. They range from cute to annoying. Fact.

Eyes on the clock

Timing is of the essence

The Mog Clock is an evolution of random battles. Unlike *FFXIII* where you could see enemies all of the time, *FFXIII-2* restricts visibility until you get closer, when enemies fade or flicker into view. Timing becomes of the essence with the Mog Clock – there's a window of opportunity to score a 'green' attack, resulting in buffs. Slower and you get yellow, normal, and even slower – red – you receive negative buffs. Simple, but effective.



IN-DEPTH



Traditionality

New features (that are actually old features)

A few angry voices out there took umbrage with *FFXIII*'s lack of traditional shops and hub areas, as well as the sometimes-painful linearity of the experience. *FFXIII-2* isn't going to be free-roaming, but it will reinstate the former two points. Regarding the latter, things will open up a bit more – areas will contain more chances to explore, and some parts will be inaccessible without a specific item, meaning players will have to explore more to find the item.

Like the talkies

Dialogue wheel making an appearance

In a decision sure to make most of us go 'whu?', *FFXIII-2* sees the introduction of a sort of dialogue wheel. While we've been assured this system will allow players to make important decisions, with things playing out differently depending on the choice, what we saw was a bit... well, pointless. Admittedly this was from one single encounter with a dialogue choice, and it would be stupid of us to claim the whole system is bad as a result.



WHAT'S GOING ON?

Yes – it's the story boxout

WE REALLY DON'T know much about the story behind *FFXIII-2*, as Squenix was cagey with any real details. We do know the game will be set straight after the events of *FFXIII* and will take place in a 'broken' Cocoon, where the world is no longer controlled by Orphan. None of that will make sense unless you played the last game, by the way.

● Destruction plays a big part this time around.



UPDATE

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

Ridge Racer: Unbounded

Yes, it's not the greatest of names

PS3 Confession time. When Namco offered a behind-closed-doors presentation of *Ridge Racer: Unbounded*, expectations were low. Already a certain **Play** reporter was clutching his stomach walking in, preparing the classic 'I need the toilet' excuse and never returning. It worked like a treat on a date once, he said, momentarily wondering if Sarah is still waiting for his return at Whipsnade Zoo.

And yet, how such cynicism was blown away by one of the genuine surprises lurking in PlayStation 3's library. Bugbear Entertainment has learnt its trade via its *FlatOut* series and that shines through in its take on Namco's drift-racing classic, marrying the old gameplay with a new destructive flavour of carnage.

Imagine *Split/Second* with the destruction directly caused by you rather than taking place around you. For example, you're not causing towers



● It just couldn't be a *Ridge Racer* game without screeching.

to collapse, you're driving into pillars to smash debris across the track and into your competitors. Everything here is based on physics, we're told, with even the trademark drifting reworked to take physics into account. Multiplayer hasn't been revealed yet and Bugbear didn't confirm what the music will be. Even so, this looks like it will be in good hands, as Namco looks to have found the fresh direction the series desperately needed.

Ridge Racer: Unbounded is being developed by Bugbear Entertainment. Check out www.bugbear.fi for more details.

READ ME

The original *Ridge Racer* allowed players to switch out the game CD for any music disc they wanted.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A fresh, Western perspective on a classic racing series.
- Destruction in a racing game is something we can't get enough of.
- We've been promised it will be for the hardcore, but also accessible.
- Interesting online features, opening multiplayer up to those who might not play usually.



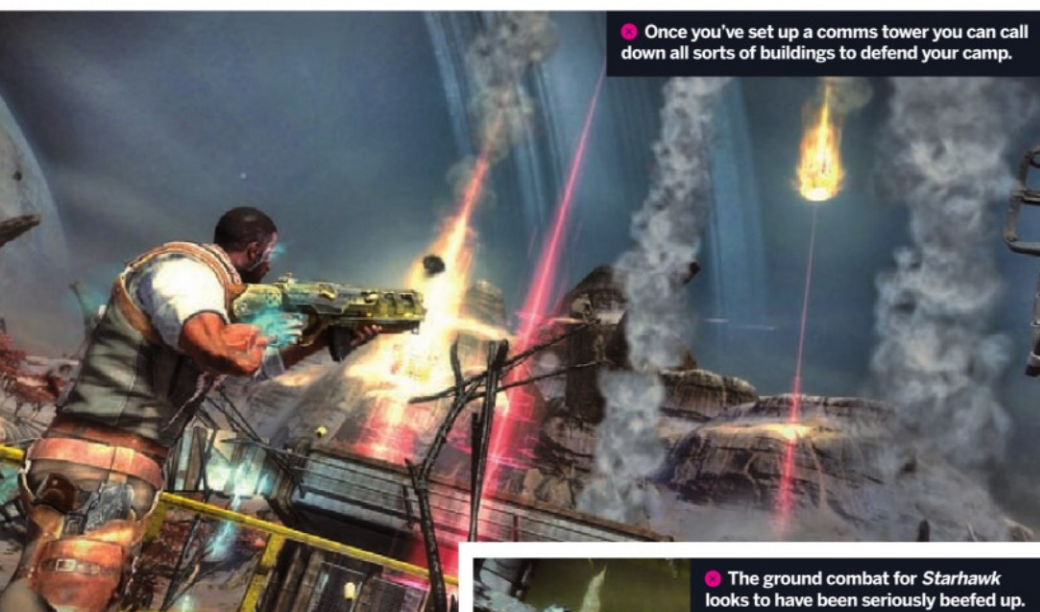
● There's definitely a more grounded, realistic feel to things.



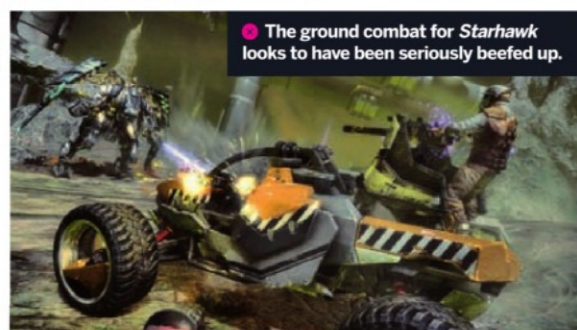
RELEASE DATE: 2012

Starhawk

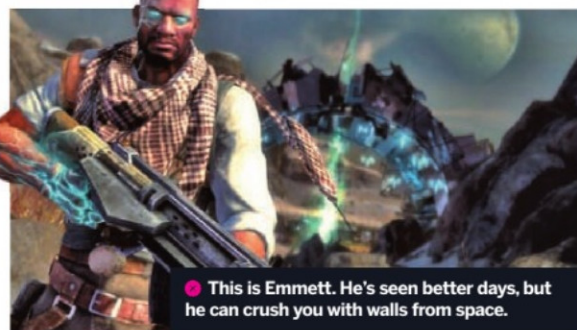
Drop and give us turrets



Once you've set up a comms tower you can call down all sorts of buildings to defend your camp.



The ground combat for *Starhawk* looks to have been seriously beefed up.



This is Emmett. He's seen better days, but he can crush you with walls from space.

ROBOTS IN DISGUISE

The Starhawks are more than meets the eye

A NICE NEW twist on *Warhawk* gameplay that its spiritual successor *Starhawk* is bringing to the equation is that the fighter jets everyone will be buzzing around in actually double as mechs on the ground. That means they are doubly effective in the battlefield, but more importantly there's a really nice transforming animation as you leap into the air in one.

Those of you who can remember back as far as the PS3 launch may recall a rather pleasant little online multiplayer game called *Warhawk*. It's been a while, but the prospect of a starry sequel has been floating around for some time. LightBox Interactive has used that time to do two important things.

First, it's added a single-player campaign. Second, it seems to have spent much of the intervening period playing tower defence and RTS titles.

The campaign does what most campaigns do these days – teach you how to play multiplayer. You'll take on the role of Emmett Graves, a gun for hire protecting prospectors in the new frontier of Rift Energy miners. Your enemy? Miners who have been driven mad by exposure to the energy source and become Outcasts. But that's really all just preamble to the important bit of actually playing the game.

And in this area you can expect much of the same vehicle and third-person shooting as

Warhawk delivered, but with the one big difference we've hinted at. Bringing some ideas from the real-time strategy arena *LightBox* is introducing the Build and Battle system, which allows you to drop buildings, such as garages for land vehicles and anti-air guns, straight from the sky and onto the battlefield. These are built using Rift Energy as currency, which is damn lucky actually because wouldn't you know it, that's exactly what you earn for killing Outcasts. Funny how these things just happen to work out for you in the end.

The Build and Battle system looks to be very fast and very cool, though, having lost most of the resource gathering and laborious construction processes that can make RTS games drag on for a bit. Throw in some spacey-looking jeeps and the all-important *Starhawk* jet fighters and you can expect some serious online madness when it all comes together.

Starhawk is being developed by LightBox Interactive. Check out the official site at starhawkthegame.com

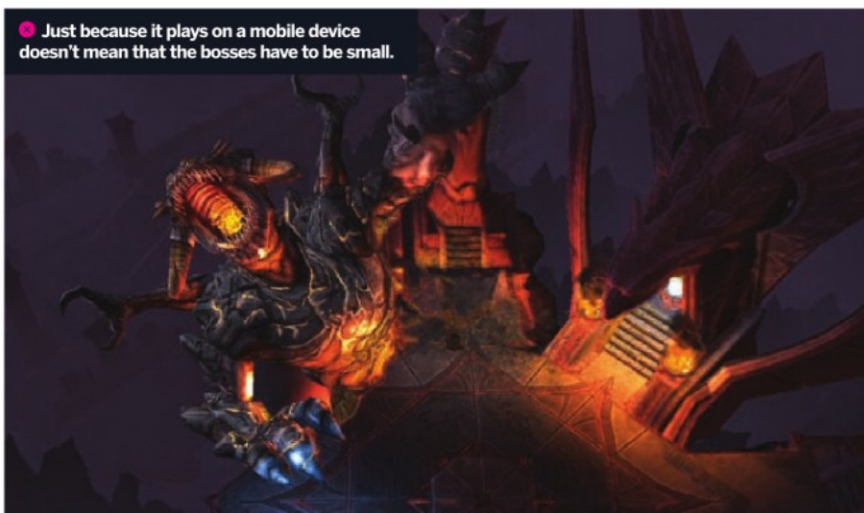
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- All the manic gameplay that made *Warhawk* such a joy to play.
- The new Build and Battle system looks to be a smart new gameplay mechanic.
- Up to 32 players online looks to be the magic number once again.
- Huge battlefields for you to conquer made to suit both ground and aerial combat.

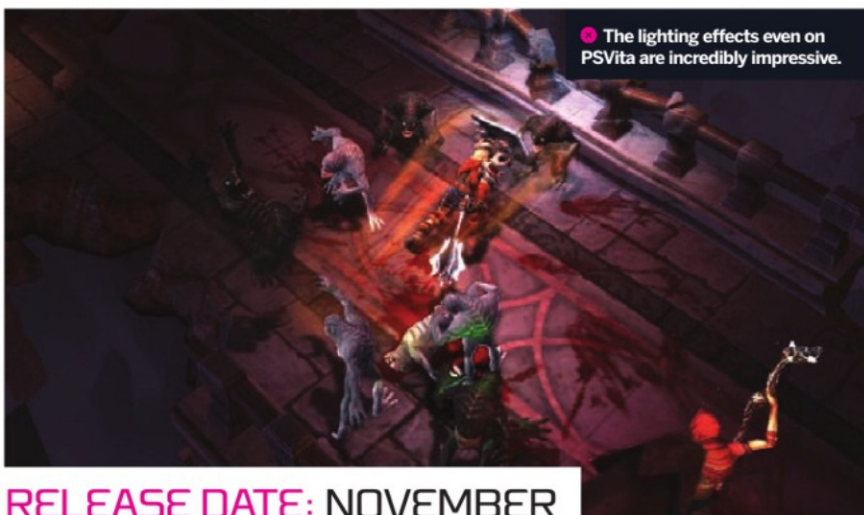
READ ME

The setting for *Starhawk* has been compared to the TV show *Firefly* with its space-meets-Western feel. This is the new frontier.

Just because it plays on a mobile device doesn't mean that the bosses have to be small.



The lighting effects even on PSVita are incredibly impressive.



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Ruin

PS3 and PSVita get their first cross-platform adventure

As the weeks, months and years pass from this day forward you'll be hearing about lots of games that will feature cross-platform gaming between the PS3 and PSVita, but remember that *Ruin* was the first. Already planned as a PSN release, *Ruin* is now also coming to Sony's new handheld and that only makes it twice as exciting as it was before.

Boil *Ruin* down to its base components and what you have is a very colourful, action-packed and accessible dungeon-crawling RPG, but what's really exciting about this game is its online functionality.



As you play through the game solo you unlock new assets and items to develop and build both your character and a lair. Around this will be your own dungeon that other players will have to defeat if they want to see your grim little home.

Ruin is a very colourful, action-packed and accessible dungeon-crawling RPG

And then there's the transferring of your game from handheld to console thanks to Cloud saving that means you just need your devices to be connected to the internet in order to transfer saves from one device to another. Oh, and you don't have to be on the same format to play with your friends either. You can be on PSVita and they can be on PS3 and it makes no difference. *Ruin* is looking like a groundbreaking game, but more importantly it looks like a lot of fun, too.

Ruin is being developed by the team behind *Pain*, Idol Minds. You can check out its official site over at www.idolminds.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The first PSVita game announced that has cross-platform play with the PS3.
- Game saves on either machine can be retrieved from Sony's Cloud anywhere.
- Classic dungeon crawler action with an exciting new social layer to freshen it up.
- Given Idol Minds' background expect this to be a lot of fun to play.



FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: TBC

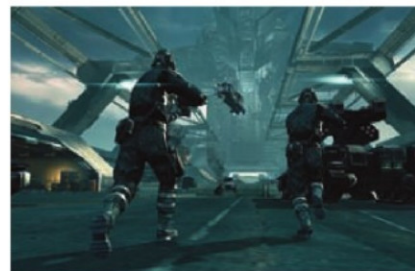
Dust 514

A unique and innovative online shooter. No, really

This one may well have gone right over your head or under your radar at E3, depending on which metaphor you want to use. On the surface, it may just look like a team-based multiplayer FPS set in a futuristic world of combat, tanks and spaceships. And yes, that's what it is. And yes, you would have every right to ignore it if that's all *Dust 514* was offering.

But it goes so, so much deeper than that – to the point that this could well be the most interesting and innovative game shown at this year's event. See, *Dust 514* links in with an existing PC MMO by the name of *EVE Online*. In the home computer title, players take to the stars in their own spacecraft, joining corporations (think clans), mining, trading, fighting, pirating and committing industrial espionage – there isn't enough room to go into it here, but we recommend you look up some *EVE* war stories. They are the stuff of emergent gaming legend.

Players of the PC game need mercenaries to conduct ground warfare for territorial gain, and that's where we

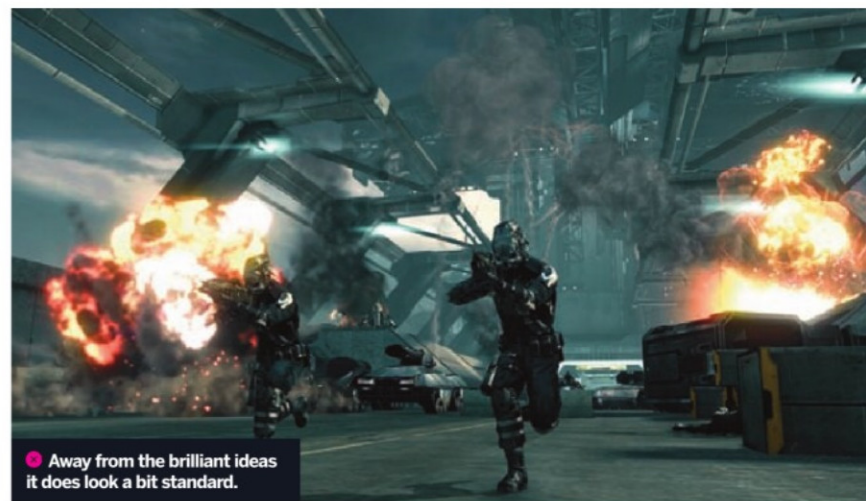


come in. We're the muscle hired by the PC's money. Battles in *Dust* directly affect outcomes in both it and *EVE*. It's the kind of idea that fills our hearts with glee. And the best thing? It's free, financed entirely by microtransactions.

Dust 514 is being developed by CCP Games. Check out www.dust514.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- This has the potential to be a genuine step forward for gaming.
- Free to play, you only have to pay if you want to pay.
- It's brilliant to see a developer taking a risk like this.
- Plus, y'know, everybody loves online multiplayer shooters.



Away from the brilliant ideas it does look a bit standard.

PREVIEW

Fans of the comics will be well catered for, with writer Mike Carey penning the story.



RELEASE DATE: AUTUMN 2011

X-Men: Destiny

An evolution in superhero action-RPGs?



With the new movie doing well, it seems the Children of the Atom are back on form and that looks set to continue with Silicon Knights' *X-Men: Destiny*.

With a story penned by X-comic scribe Mike Carey, *Destiny* is set to

hew closely to the printed mythos, with characters new and old appearing through the game. You won't be playing as any of them, though; instead, you'll control one of three new mutants coming to terms with their powers, with a karma system not dissimilar

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Strong connection with the Marvel Universe from writer Mike Carey.
- Customisable power sets give a hugely varied approach to gameplay.
- Fan-favourite characters in their most recognisable forms.
- Speedy and satisfying combat, with impressively huge bosses.



You'll play as one of three new mutants rather than the more well-known X-Men characters.

to *inFamous* weighing your decisions between the ideals of the X-Men and their opposites, the Brotherhood.

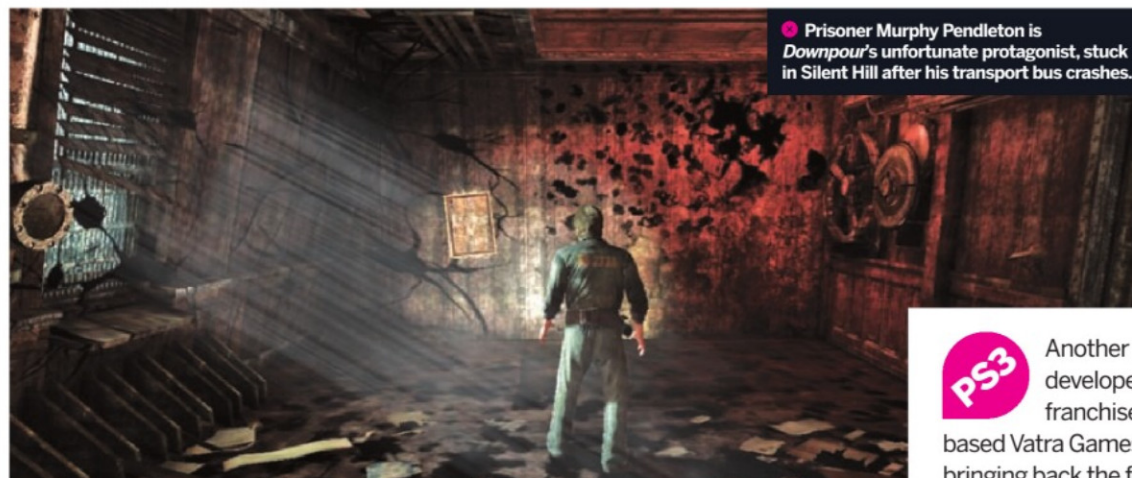
Melee combat seems to take a page from Cole MacGrath's playbook, though liberties are being taken with the X-Men concept in the name of the RPG elements. Besides specific core abilities, with new character Aimi Yoshida boasting energy projection skills, you'll supplement powers with X-Genes extracted from other characters, customising your character's capabilities. Unlockable costumes based on other X-Men provide further boosts when matched with appropriate powers, with the E3 demo showing Aimi donning



Quicksilver's outfit to maximise speed in a boss-fight against John Sublime.

Whether *X-Men: Destiny* alienates non-comic fans with its use of obscure continuity remains to be seen but it's shaping up to be a promising title so far.

Silicon Knights' own site is curiously still pimping *Too Human* but Marvel.com has updates on *X-Men: Destiny*.



Prisoner Murphy Pendleton is *Downpour's* unfortunate protagonist, stuck in Silent Hill after his transport bus crashes.

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2011

Silent Hill: Downpour

An odd case of hydrophobia



Another game and another developer for Konami's horror franchise – but will Czech-based Vatra Games fare any better at bringing back the foreboding sense of dread than other Western devs have?

So far, things are looking promising at least. The newest inhabitant of the town from hell is Murphy Pendleton, a prisoner who escapes after his transport bus crashes in a forest. Once again, the setting seems to have changed; Silent Hill is now a rustic, mountainside locale, cultivating a superb sense of isolation.

With no on-screen display, Vatra is going for a more cinematic feel. You'll know how healthy Murphy is by how he walks, limping and clutching injuries after attacks. There's also a return

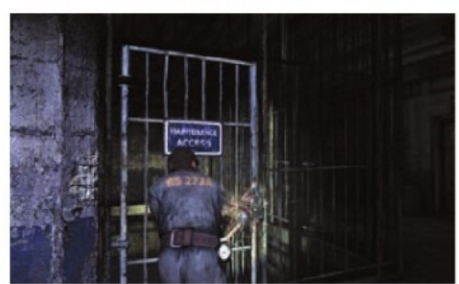
of paranoia and helplessness – your weapons degrade, you're an outcast to anyone you meet and you have no idea what's going on. Water seems to be the trigger to the terrifying Otherworld sequences – one seeing you running down an ever-extending corridor, a nightmarish light pursuing you. Whether the homage is deliberate is unclear but *Downpour* creates the same fear of the simple drip, drip, drip of a tap as Hideo Nakata's *Dark Water* movie.

A prisoner with a murky past, a creepy water motif and heart-stopping tension? Seems like the series really is back on track.

Konami isn't developing *Downpour*, but the official site at www.konami.com/silenthill/ still offers a wealth of info on the game.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The fear is back in *Silent Hill* again, for the first time in years.
- A lead character whose back story is ripe for metaphorical exploration.
- Subtle visual clues for status, not screen-hogging displays, maintain immersiveness.
- Currently no sign of the series' rather overused Pyramid Head!



Weapons will degrade over time, helping to increase tension and feelings of paranoia.



Frank West is back as the lead protagonist but you can still play as Chuck in co-op.



There's still plenty of crazy costumes and weapons.

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Dead Rising 2: Off The Record

So, what exactly would Frank do?

PS3 Uranus. LOLZ! Get it? It's part of the new theme park included in *Dead Rising 2: Off The Record*, and one of the strongest weapons in Capcom's arsenal to convince fans to reinvest in the Frank West take on the *Dead Rising 2* tale. The theme park, that is. Not your... you know. "The theme park is called Uranus Zone, which is planned to squeeze more humour so we can put in more mini-games like Molemen From Uranus, the whack-a-mole game," explains executive producer Jason Leigh with a straight face. "That's the beauty of *Dead Rising*. We've got this dark humour where you

can have this very serious story and very serious moments where you can see those scenes with Chuck wearing silly costumes. So having the game and series set itself apart from that, that's why we like working on the series."

Other things we learnt from Leigh – the difficulty will be on par with the original *Dead Rising 2*, with zombies showing increased aggression to counteract the inclusion of checkpoints. There are new scare zombies, which are rare but "if you come around the corner or pass over a dead body, they leap out with an audio sting." Frank will start with most of his upgraded moves, including his dropkick and roll move. Best new weapon? The Cyropod, a dustbin/fire extinguisher combo that launches zombies into the air. Now there's something you don't see in Uranus.



Dead Rising 2: Off The Record is being developed by Capcom Vancouver. Check out www.capcomvancouver.com for details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- More ridiculous costumes, weapons and stunts to enjoy.
- Fans will enjoy the return of Frank West and his improved camera.
- Co-op mode allows you to play as either of the two heroes.
- It's not just a straight remake, there'll be new areas to explore.



Mountain ranges have been mapped according to data from NASA.

FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: JANUARY 2012

SSX

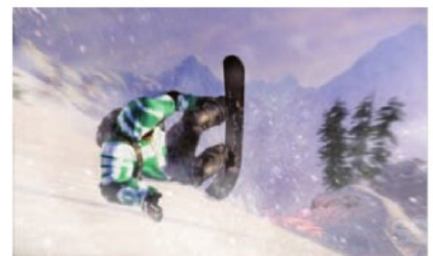
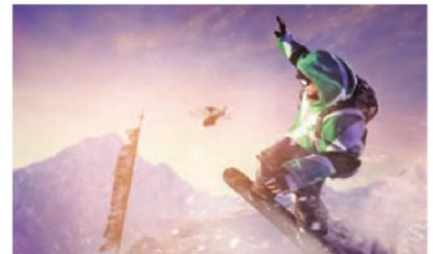
EA's new brand of ice-capades

PS3 When EA first showed the world the newly rebooted *SSX*, it was taken to be moody, gritty and all the other things you associate with a reboot, primarily because every single reboot is the same, give or take. Anyway, snowboarding and punishing realism don't go together that well, so EA has changed tack and decided to show off the game's more 'rad' elements at E3.

One of the things you'll be able to do is use a globe to drop straight in on every major mountain range you can possibly think of, all modelled using data straight from NASA. So it's going open-world, a bit.

There will be more of a realistic edge to things then, but it's not overriding. There will still be loads of insane death-defying tricks and snow-based japes, tossing yourself into the air over trees and even the wreckage of crashed jet planes (no half-eaten *Alive*-style bodies, though, sadly).

It's an interesting duality to maintain, the realistic and the sheer fun, and it could be as tricky to pull off as a 1,080-degree spin over a pit full of rabid



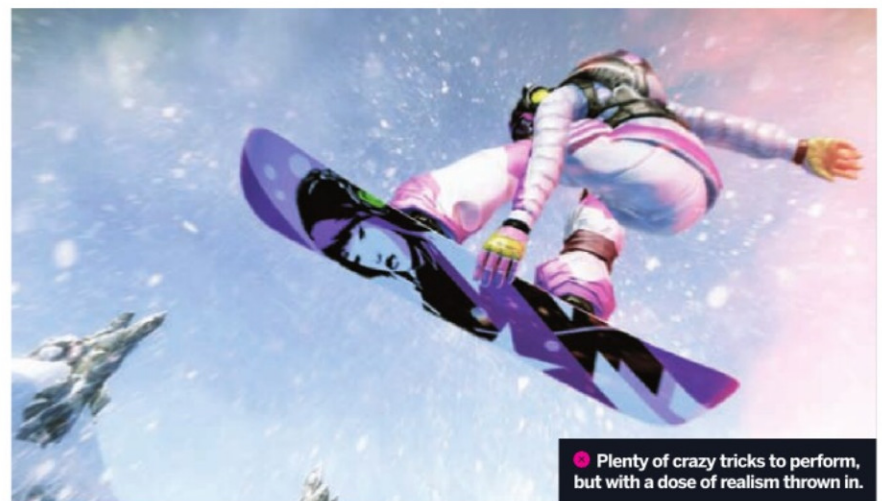
monkeys. However, from the short portion of pre-alpha code we played, it seems like fun is going to be what wins out in the end.

And there's a bit where you can perform a big combo that rewards you with a rippling wave of snow shooting out all around you, perfect for taking out competitors.

SSX is being developed by EA Canada. Check out the E3 trailer on the official website here: www.ea.com/ssx/1/ssx

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's the return of a much-loved franchise, last seen in 2007.
- Realistic courses mixed with over-the-top tricks and stunts.
- Characters like Elise will return, with more still to be announced.
- Spectacular combos are met with equally spectacular rewards.



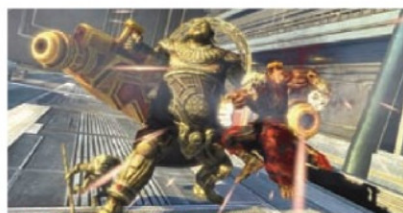
Plenty of crazy tricks to perform, but with a dose of realism thrown in.

PREVIEW

**PAYDAY: THE HEIST**

Publisher: Sony Developer: Overkill Software ETA: 2011 Format: PSN

MIXING LEFT 4 *Dead* with some of the best moments from *Grand Theft Auto IV* and *Kane & Lynch*, *PayDay: The Heist* took a lot of people by surprise at E3 by that, we don't mean they walked into the stand by mistake. This four-player co-op shooter puts you in the shoes of a team of bank robbers in six high-intensity robberies. Think *Kane & Lynch's* multiplayer but better. Hopefully.

**ASURA'S WRATH**

Publisher: Capcom Developer: CyberConnect2 ETA: 2011 Format: PS3

"IT WAS THE plan to make a crazy game," producer Kazuhiro Tsuchiya tells us. "To be really crazy, to get people talking. When we started with the script, it was an over-the-top, crazy game. When we went to the storyboards, it got crazier. So we just wanted to make it even more crazy." So is it crazy?

**XCOM**

Publisher: 2K Games Developer: 2K Marin ETA: March 2012 Format: PS3

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED AS an Xbox 360 exclusive, we were pleased to hear that 2K had made the smart decision of bringing this unusual shooter to the PS3. With its strange cuboid enemies and an alien invasion it's kind of like *Homefront* meets *The Twilight Zone*.

**SFIII: 3RD STRIKE ONLINE**

Publisher: Capcom Developer: Capcom ETA: TBA Format: PSN

SO IT'S FINALLY here. Capcom's parry-happy classic of the 2D genre is within touching distance of PSN, bringing with it new filters (horrible), fresh artwork (okay) and challenges (awesome). One challenge sees you re-creating the famous Daigo moment from *Evo*. Look up 'Evo Moment #37' on YouTube. It's worth it.

**DMC: DEVIL MAY CRY**

Publisher: Capcom Developer: Ninja Theory ETA: 2012 Format: PS3

WHETHER OR NOT the latest images and trailer for *DmC: Devil May Cry* has appeased the hardcore fans who dislike Ninja Theory's take on the franchise, we really don't know, but even if he doesn't have white hair and anime features, the moves and world still feel like Dante's. We're still going to need some convincing, but we'll be keeping our fingers crossed Ninja Theory proves it was the right developer for this game.

THE BEST OF THE REST...

**GOTHAM CITY IMPOSTERS**

Publisher: Warner Bros. Developer: Monolith ETA: 2012 Format: PS3

OF ALL THE likely directions Warner Bros. could have taken the *Batman* licence this isn't one we could have predicted, but it's interesting all the same. It's *Batman* versus *The Joker*, only with the citizens of Gotham taking centre stage and picking sides. Bottom line is team-based multiplayer from the makers of *F.E.A.R.* so we're in.

**BODYCOUNT**

Publisher: Codemasters Developer: Guildford Studio ETA: August Format: PS3

HAVING GONE DARK for a while we have to admit to being concerned about how *Bodycount* was going, but its showing at E3 impressed many. Its slick combat and mixture of setting should make it an interesting shooter, but its thunder may well have been stolen by other FPS releases in 2011.

**THE LORD OF THE RINGS: WAR IN THE NORTH**

Publisher: Warner Bros. Developer: Snowblind Studios ETA: August Format: PS3

A LOOTING HACK-'N'-SLASH RPG set in *Lord Of The Rings* world? How did no one think of this before? Throw in some co-op and some pretty brutal moves and this could be an interesting stopgap before the winter blockbusters arrive.

**BROTHERS IN ARMS: FURIOUS 4**

Publisher: Ubisoft Developer: Gearbox Software ETA: 2012 Format: PS3

WITH DUKE NUKEM failing to impress, Gearbox may feel it has something to prove with the games it has in development, but early word on *Aliens* and this new *Brothers In Arms* would suggest its reputation remains intact. Bringing together the four-player antics of *Borderlands* and mixing it with the brutal, but fun look of Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*, *Furious 4* looks like an interesting new direction.

**SKULLGIRLS**

Publisher: Autumn Games Developer: Reverge Labs ETA: TBC 2011 Format: PSN

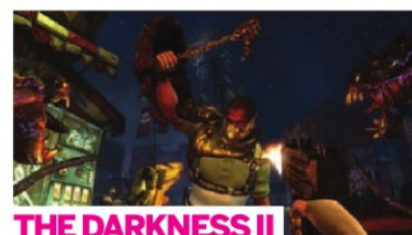
AS STRANGE AND quirky fighters go we didn't think *Arcana Heart 3* was going to be beaten, but *Skullgirls* could well take the crown. With its offbeat art style, precision fighting and great sense of humour this is one beat-'em-up hardcore pugilists should be keeping an eye on.



LITTLEBIGPLANET

Publisher: Sony
Developer: Tarsier Studios
ETA: 2011
Format: PSV

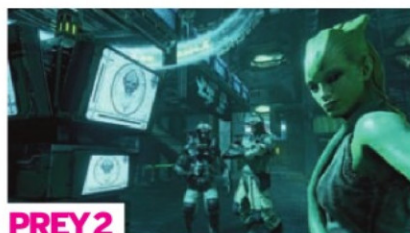
HAVING BUILT UP an excellent reputation building DLC packs for the PS3 *LBP* games Tarsier has now been tasked with bringing Sackboy to PSVita and what a job it seems to be doing. With every function of the device open to creators and the ability to draw items with your finger on the touch screen, playing, creating and sharing with *LittleBigPlanet* on PSVita is going to be out of this world.



THE DARKNESS II

Publisher: 2K Games **Developer:** Digital Extremes **ETA:** October **Format:** PS3

WE'VE BEEN WONDERING pretty much since the first *Darkness* game when Jackie Estacado would have to face enemies as strange and powerful as he is. Now we know it will be in *The Darkness II* as Jackie faces a much more supernatural challenge than he did last time and puts his life on the line.



PREY 2

Publisher: Bethesda **Developer:** Human Head Studios **ETA:** TBA **Format:** PS3

WE'LL EXCUSE THE if-it-can-go-wrong-it-will E3 demo and similarly, we'll forgive the slightly awkward third-person-game-in-a-first-person-disguise mechanics. We'll also stop using dashes and say if the *Brink* acrobatics convince, if the hub is engaging and if the story holds up, this should be a worthy sequel.



STAR TREK

Publisher: Paramount **Developer:** Digital Extremes **ETA:** Summer 2012 **Format:** PS3

THIS CO-OP SHOOTER is being lined up for release to tie in with a new *Star Trek* movie, but its early announcement makes us hope this will be more than your average movie tie-in rubbish. Playing as Kirk and Spock in co-op goes some way to convincing us, too.



STREET FIGHTER X TEKKEN

Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **ETA:** 2012 **Format:** PS3 & PSV

SO CAPCOM TOLD us that *Street Fighter X Tekken* will be coming to PSVita, with Cole from *inFamous 2* as an exclusive character. Then we found out Cammy, Hwoarang and Julia had joined the roster. Most importantly, the combo system has changed. Everyone can now chain Light, Medium and Heavy attacks into launcher which tags their partner in. Fast, easy, sexy. Just like **Play**.



PIXELJUNK SIDESCROLLER

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** Q Games **ETA:** 2012 **Format:** PS3

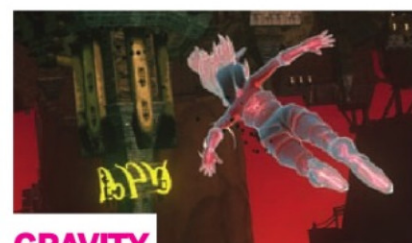
Q GAMES IS at it again as it takes its work on *PixelJunk Shooter* to a natural conclusion with the co-op insanity of a classic arcade shoot-'em-up. With all the wonderful physics engine magic of its recent releases thrown in with some *Tron*-esque neons, *PixelJunk Sidescroller* looks like another hit.



EL SHADDAI: ASCENSION OF THE METATRON

Publisher: Ignition Entertainment **Developer:** Ignition Entertainment **ETA:** September **Format:** PS3

EL SHADDAI'S STUNNING visual style has always been remarked upon, but it wasn't really until very recently that its gameplay became the focus. With the Tower of Babel used to structure the game into seven levels and with its slick combat system, word of mouth for this game is ramping up significantly.



GRAVITY

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** Team Siren **ETA:** TBC **Format:** PSN/PSV

DEFYING THE FORCES of nature is becoming easier and easier in videogames it would seem and *Gravity* has its core gameplay set in a weightless world. From the team that brought us *Siren: Blood Curse*, *Gravity* was picking up a lot of buzz on the E3 showroom floor and looks superb on PSVita.



ANARCHY REIGNS

Publisher: Sega **Developer:** Platinum Games **ETA:** 2012 **Format:** PS3

HANDS UP THOSE who have played *Virtual On*? Oh. Two of you. Sigh. Okay then, here goes. *Virtual On* was centred around head-to-head battles in open, square arenas. *Anarchy Reigns* multiplayer is just like *Virtual On* but with humans, not mechs. See? A tiny preview and you learned something! **Play** – it's for everyone!



SLY COOPER: THIEVES IN TIME

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** Sanzaru Games **ETA:** 2012 **Format:** PS3

AS PRETTY MUCH the only major new exclusive announced for PS3 at this year's E3 *Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time* is in a pretty privileged position. It's also a testament to how popular the HD collection must have been that its makers Sanzaru Games has been given the honour of developing this first sequel in six years. We could definitely do with a little more Sly in our lives.

THE 25 BEST GAMES FOR UNDER

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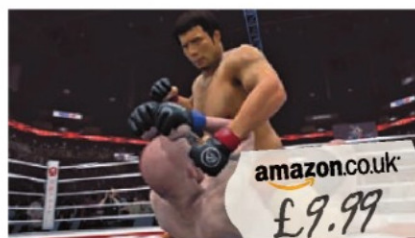
If current economic trends are anything to go by, we're all broke. But seeing as we're all hugely dependent on gaming to stop us from going insane with boredom, we need games. Play is here to help you, because we love you. So get a tenner out of your wallet and aim it in the general direction of one of these badboys



Assassin's Creed II

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 89%
Price: £8.99 at Play.com

If you were put off by the fact this game got one per cent less than it needed to get highlighted in Playlist then you should seriously reconsider that stance. *Assassin's Creed II* is a lot of game for very little money right now, and even though we've had one sequel (and have another one coming soon enough) *ACII* is still absolutely worth your time and effort. Even if Ezio is still a bit too annoying for our liking.



EA Sports MMA

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 89%
Price: £9.99 at Amazon.co.uk

Well this one vanished without a trace, didn't it? And that was quite an annoying thing to happen, what with it being a genuine alternative to the *UFC* series. It divided the office, but we found *MMA*'s take on the man-punch (and grapple) genre to be a thrilling affair, relying on skill and reactions over blindly learning button/stick combinations. Ten quid isn't a huge risk to see if you like it, not that it is actually a risk seeing as we recommend it.



Far Cry 2

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 74%
Price: £10 at Amazon.co.uk

You either love *Far Cry 2* or you're left a bit cold by it. We erred more on the side of the latter, but it's difficult not to demand you give the game a chance for less money than it costs for one of your fancy 'hair' 'cuts'. One of the most well-realised settings in recent memory and an atmosphere that can totally envelop you, should you let it, accompany a solid, if unspectacular, shooty-drivey-boomy FPS. Also: really nice fire.



BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 85%
Price: £9.91 at Amazon.co.uk

Easily one of the best fighting games on PS3, as well as one of the best-looking. We can only think the price has dropped so phenomenally because of how unrelentingly hardcore the whole experience is. Still, it's akin to paying not-quite-ten-pounds to get a brilliant training product so you can try to teach yourself how to not lose as badly against Ryan King. You will still lose against him, though. You just... will.



Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 85%
Price: £9.99 at Amazon.co.uk

Most offers on these pages come in at a whopping one whole game for less than a tenner. The *Mega Drive Ultimate Collection* sees a penny under ten notes bagging 48 games. Full ones. Old ones, granted, but full ones nonetheless. That's (maths time!) 20.8p per game. That's bloody cheap. Granted, some titles like *Super Thunder Blade* aren't actually worth 20p, but the point stands: the bang-to-buck ratio is huge here.



Batman: Arkham Asylum

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 85%
Price: £9.99 at Play.com

If you made your excuses in the past about not wanting to play *Arkham Asylum* – it's a licensed game, you don't like bat-like men, you're allergic to having amazing amounts of fun, or whatever – then you can stop that silliness right now. For less than the cost of £11-worth of petrol you can pick up one of the best games based on Gary Bat-Man ever made. In fact, it's probably *the best*, at least until *Arkham City* comes out.

PLAY.COM
MOVIES MUSIC GAMES
£9.99



Everybody's Golf 2

PSP Format: PSP Score: 86%
Price: £9.99 at Amazon.co.uk

It's not the best golf game ever made – it's second best after *Everybody's Golf: World Tour* on PS3. Still, that does mean it's better than *every other golf game out there*, and seeing as it's on PSP you can go and sit in a field – maybe even on a golf course – while playing it. Painfully addictive and endlessly giving with its dumb little rewards and costumes, there's a hell of a lot of play-time in *EG2*.



Brütal Legend

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 79%
Price: £9.62 at Amazon.co.uk

For about the cost of an album of your favourite Barry Manilow songs you can pick up *Brütal Legend* – like an über-album of metal treats with an iffy, but ultimately satisfying game thrown in for free. Admittedly if you're not a fan of metal, Jack Black or anything Tim Schafer does you're likely to be disappointed, but that's fine. Because you're the kind of people we don't really want to talk to anyway. Decapitationooooooooooooo!



R.U.S.E.

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 82%
Price: £9.99 at Play.com

The best real-time strategy game you can control using Move on PS3. Also, we think, the only one. But don't let that put you off, because *R.U.S.E.* is genuinely a very good game. Sure, it involves that whole 'thinking' thing that isn't too popular, and yes, you have to use 'tactics' to succeed – but we have faith that you, our readers, are smart enough to succeed here. Also it's only a tenner, so if you're rubbish at it it doesn't matter.



Alpha Protocol

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 83%
Price: £9.85 at Shopto.net

We recommended it at full price, but Obsidian's spy RPG is the epitome of a game you should buy for £9.85. Worth absolutely every penny and cheap enough that you can overlook its myriad flaws and see the glimmering diamond within. No, it's not perfect. Yes, it does have some fantastic ideas and mechanics (more games need to rip off *AP's* conversation system) and the replay factor is through the roof. Just remember to level up your pistol skills.



Rock Band: The Beatles

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 96%
Price: £5 at Play.com

Yes, that says 96%. No, that mark probably doesn't apply if you, like some members of the **Play** team, hate The Beatles. But there's no denying this is one of the most lovingly crafted and finely made of the individual band spin-offs, and while your five notes doesn't bag you the instruments, too – that would be ridiculous – it does get you all of the songs you love. If you like The Beatles, that is.



GTA: Liberty City Stories/Vice City Stories

PSP Format: PSP Score: 95%/96%
Price: £7.99 each at Play.com

It's a toss up between whether you want to play in Liberty City or Vice City here, without much really between them quality-wise. True, *Chinatown Wars* is arguably the best *Grand Theft Auto* game on PSP, but these two – the two that aped the home console versions so very much – are still fantastic games and can take you back to a time when things were so much simpler. Ish. £7.99 is an absolute bargain, representing MEGA VALUE.



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£9.85

God Of War: Chains Of Olympus

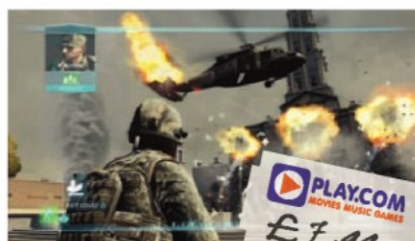
PSP Format: PSP Score: 84%
Price: £9.85 at Shopto.net

How can a god – someone of such stature, power and fury – come at the price of... well, of a rather well-off peasant? We do not pretend to know, for the work of the gods is mysterious indeed and we would not want to anger them with our aimless speculation. Oh, also this is a really good price for a really good game, and if you haven't yet had your fix of Kratos-in-your-hands, it seems now is the right time to do so.



amazon.co.uk

£10



PLAY.COM
MOVIES MUSIC GAMES
£7.99

Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 83%
Price: £7.99 at Play.com

Ghost Recon seemed to have fallen by the wayside on the big boy consoles until *Future Soldier* popped its future-face up for us all to stare at. It's easy to forget that *GRAW 2* both wasn't a bad game at all and was an acronym that didn't make us want to violently eject our stomach contents all over the nearest passing pedestrian. It's getting on a bit now, but for a penny less than eight pounds there's a lot of tactical fun to be had.

Rainbow Six Vegas 2

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 78%
Price: £10 at Amazon.co.uk

Tom Clancy is well represented in this list, it seems – maybe he's the master of putting his name to games that are worth a tenner. Regardless, *Rainbow Six Vegas 2* is still great fun and it only got a lower mark than the original thanks to it being a big pile of unoriginality. If you can still get a game going with mates, it's also one of the best experiences you can have online. Especially when everyone in your team chooses the riot shield.



amazon.co.uk
£9.91

Just Cause 2

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 87%
Price: £9.91 at Amazon.co.uk

For a sum so paltry we think a new word should be invented to describe it – let's go with "thithtern" – you get 400 square miles of sheer, ridiculous joy. That works out at just about 40.36 square miles per pound. How many other games give you that much? And how many other games let you skydive out of a crashing 747 into a helicopter that you then hijack midair and crash into a nightclub-blimp? None. That's how many.

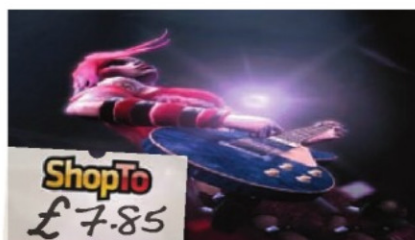


amazon.co.uk
£7.50

Half-Minute Hero

PSP Format: PSP Score: 87%
Price: £7.50 at Amazon.co.uk

We would happily pay about eight times this amount for this. Granted, the title is a complete lie and we do so hate liars in all (alright, most) forms, but in this case it is a good thing. Rather than half a minute of entertainment, you will get many minutes of entertainment for your seven and a half quids, as well as a handful of different games to enjoy. It was worth it at full price, it's more worth it now.

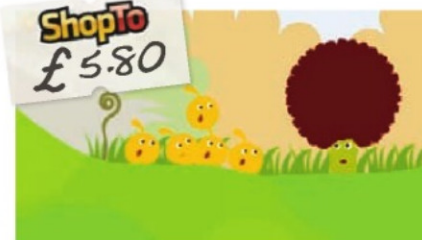


ShopTo
£7.85

Guitar Hero III: Warriors Of Rock

PS3 Format: PS3 Score: 71%
Price: £7.85 at Shopto.net

Not the best in the series, but certainly the cheapest we saw on our rounds. Back in the days before drums and microphones came to the fore, arguably ruining the purity of what made *Guitar Hero* so compelling in the first place (NB we don't actually believe this at all), Activision released the third in the series. And it had Slash in it. And that's about it. You can also get *Band Hero* dirt cheap, but that's got worse music on it.



ShopTo
£5.80

LocoRoco 2

PSP Format: PSP Score: 82%
Price: £5.80 at Shopto.net

You can probably find this much money on the floor of your local high street or down the back of your sofa if you commit a good hour or two to looking. And what reward would you get? Why, one of the cutest little balls of fun ever to warm the screen of your PSP with its loving, chubby little balls of singing glee. Honestly, we are talking about a game here. Deceptively simple yet utterly captivating, *LocoRoco 2* is a genu-bargain at this price.

FOUND AN EXTRA FIVER?

Up your spend by just five quid and you can pick up these gems, all under £15



01 The Orange Box

Format: PS3 Score: 93%

Price: £14.20 at Amazon.co.uk

It's got *Half-Life 2* on it. That's all you need to know. You should be willing to remortgage your house for that badboy. Or just get a mortgage in the first place. Throw in *Portal* and *Team Fortress 2* and you have a genuinely compelling reason to part with that extra five pounds. *The Orange Box* is still one of the best-value packages ever released.

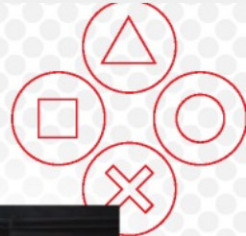


02 Grand Theft Auto IV

Format: PS3 Score: 98%

Price: £14.99 at Amazon.co.uk

Yes, that is the real score that we gave it in *Play*. Yes, we know it's a big number. Yes, it is deserved. Is it any wonder, then, that we're telling you to buy the game? The dicking about potential alone is worth well over 15 quid, so the fact you get a full and exciting campaign to play through is the bloodstained icing on this particular 98% cake.



Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker

PSP **Format: PSP Score: 92%**
Price: £9.99 each at Play.com
 It's dawned on us in the time since *Peace Walker's* release that it may well be the best game on PSP. If you own the pointlessly shunned handheld, you owe it to yourself to pick up one of Snake's finest ever adventures for the pittanciest pittance ever. Even if you don't have a PSP, you should think about buying one to play *Peace Walker* how it should be played – tranquing enemy troops on the bus is an experience like no other.

PLAY.COM
 MOVIES MUSIC GAMES
 £1.11



Fight Night Round 4

PS3 **Format: PS3 Score: 84%**
Price: £9.85 at Shopto.net

If you're short by £20-30 for the newest in the series, *Champion*, rest easy that ten of the Queen's pounds can pick you up a copy of the former best boxing game out there. Even by today's standards it's a looker and – unsurprisingly – it's still fun to play. Even if the AI is a bit of a dick. But for cheap multiplayer shenanigans you can't go far wrong with spending 15p less than a tenner on this punch simulator.



Pure

PS3 **Format: PS3 Score: 80%**
Price: £8.49 at Amazon.co.uk

We seem to see motocross and ATV games popping up all over the place, and frankly we have no idea why. *nail'd* was boring, *MX Vs ATV: Alive* was a terrible experiment and a dull game. *Pure*, on the other hand, nailed it three years ago when it came out and still hasn't been bettered. Think *SSX* on quad bikes and you're on the right tracks. Then think 'eight pounds forty-nine is a really good price for this game' and you're on ever righter tracks.



Prince Of Persia

PS3 **Format: PS3 Score: 83%**
Price: £9.85 at Shopto.net

Look, we know a lot of people disagree with our score on this game, but we were vindicated when *The Forgotten Sands* was released – it's a good, solid title. Now you have less excuse to avoid the subtitle-less *Prince Of Persia*, as it can be nabbed for a fraction of a pittance. And just think – your hard-earned quidlets will be helping to perpetuate the career of one Nolan North, and you all know how much we love him appearing in Every Game Ever.



Tekken: Dark Resurrection

PSP **Format: PSP Score: 92%**
Price: £5.98 at Amazon.co.uk

Tekken 6 is the most recent and best *Tekken* game on PSP, but we're tempted to revoke the latter point when we take into account how much of a steal *Dark Resurrection* is. This is almost half of ten pounds. There are some magazines that cost this much. Not us, obviously, and *obviously* you should buy **Play** instead of games. But the point stands. Also: there's no Azazel in this iteration, meaning it's not REALLY ANNOYING.



FIFA 10

PS3 **Format: PS3 Score: 90%**
Price: £4.99 at Amazon.co.uk

Annoyed by *FIFA 11's* near-cheating AI? Fancy a simpler time, back when [player we can't think of] was still at [arbitrary Premiership team]? Do you really not care that much about an updated career mode, instead preferring a slightly broken one? Then *FIFA 10* has everything you need! In all seriousness, though, if you just can't be bothered forking out for newer versions every year, five quid for this still-brilliant version of the best current football game around is worth it.



03 Vanquish

Format: PS3 Score: 93%
Price: £13.85 at Shopto.net

A few complaints were raised in the wake of *Vanquish's* release, mainly about how short it was. Yes, it's only five hours long but if you aren't replaying *Vanquish* to revel in its absurdity then you're missing the point. But even if you don't want to replay it on God Hard, this isn't exactly an extortionate cost for five of the best gaming hours of your life.



04 Split/Second

Format: PS3 Score: 90%
Price: £13.85 at Shopto.net

The racing genre seems woefully underrepresented in this list, so *Split/Second* goes some way to redressing that balance. Pure, unadulterated arcade fun is the name of the game, and who wouldn't want to pay 13-and-a-bit pounds to be able to drop buildings on their mates while driving around at high speeds? A moron, that's who.



05 Demon's Souls

Format: PS3 Score: 92%
Price: £14.99 at Play.com

You may have heard us mention this one before. We tend to do that with games that may well prove to be the best of the generation. 15 quid to get lost, overwhelmed and killed in a dark, foreboding world might not be the best sales pitch ever, but they're all valid reasons to want in on this. We might even dare go this far: it's a masterpiece.

LETTERS TO THE DEVELOPER

DEVELOPERS ARE LAZY. DLC IS TAKEN OUT FROM THE FULL GAME. GAME STORIES ARE AWFUL. THESE ARE THE COMPLAINTS WE HEAR FROM GAMERS ALL THE TIME. NOW DEVELOPERS TO ANSWER BACK!

"I'm not saying COD has bad story!"

"It's easy for marketing to grab images of these guys"

"We always want to tweak them just a little bit more"

"We had NO idea what Rockstar was doing"

"We're all big fans"

"I have to bite my tongue"

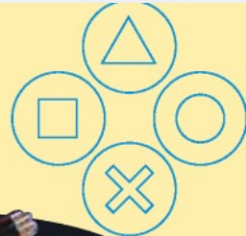
"There are bad decisions and we all make mistakes"

"People who have never heard the word crunch..."

"New features! New technology! New tools!"

"In fact, photorealism in games does not make it credible at all"





1. DEVELOPERS ARE LAZY

“We often read developers accused of being ‘lazy.’ As developers yourselves, how do you feel when you read posts like that?”

DREW HOLMES

Writer, Red Faction: Armageddon

I have to bite my tongue. You know, I think what people need to understand is there's always a reason why something is the way it is. Whether it's a technical limitation or a decision that's completely out of your hands at a business level, there's a broad spectrum of reasons why things can't be done or aren't done a certain way. It's never lazy. It is *never* lazy.

ERIC BARKER

Technical director, Volition

People who have never heard the word crunch... I mean, if it's lazy, then game designers would all be going home at 5pm every night to see their families. And that's really not how it works, you know?

DREW HOLMES

Writer, Red Faction: Armageddon

There are bad decisions and we all make mistakes. Everyone's human. But it's *never* lazy.

ERIC BARKER

Technical director, Volition

The thing you've got to realise, it's just the medium of videogames. Writers write novels and the language is pretty much set. They work with the tools that are there. Filmmakers, okay, there are special effects but films work largely with the tools that are set. Videogames are constantly developing. 'New features! New technology! New tools!' It's always moving. You've got to have the features that the last guy had! It's constant evolution. You're learning to play the violin as you're on stage. Just to have to say I want to be able to do this and now I have to create the technology and tools to be able to achieve that, that's just mind-blowing. That's really impressive and it's something a lot of other mediums don't have to deal with.





2. DEVELOPERS COPY OTHER GAMES

“When *Saints Row 1* came out, a lot of forums moaned about it copying *GTA*. What do you have to say about accusations like that?”

GREG DONOVAN

Producer, *Saints Row: The Third*

Well... you got, like, another 40 minutes there? [laughs] The short thing is the *GTA* franchise is phenomenal. We're all big fans. I think they've done wonderful things. I did not work on *Saints Row 1*. On *Saints Row 2*, the comparisons still came. I think those comparisons were inevitable and I think that what has really made us feel proud is after *Saints Row 2* came out, the prevailing response, at least to my recollection, is that it's not a clone but a separate game. That was our goal from the beginning. For whatever reasons, people thought it was a clone but it wasn't our intention, even from *Saints Row 1*.

You've got to remember, when the studio did *Saints Row 1*, we had NO idea what Rockstar was doing. How could we? On *Saints Row: The Third*, we're not worried about what they're doing. We think they have a separate game. We believe that very strongly. In fact, we believe that we own the space for over-the-top open-world gameplay. So do I get bothered when I read those? I think when I was younger and more naive, I would get a little bit more upset but the tone has changed a lot. I like seeing those comments because it helps us make better games, and that's good. I've seen it come around and there's a decidedly different tone if you look at the comments from when *Saints Row 1* came out.

3. DLC IS CUT FROM GAME

How do you feel when forums say DLC is stuff you've simply cut from the full game to charge for it later down the line?

DAVID FRIEDLAND

Senior designer, *WWE All Stars*

You sort of shrug it off. As a developer, you know the hard work you've put into your product. The 30-man roster that we have in *WWE All Stars* was a ton of work and we were fine-tuning them literally to the point where they dragged it out of our hands. These guys are really well balanced and they're great but we're perfectionists. We always want to tweak them just a little bit more.

So yeah, the entire development cycle, those 30 guys kept us super busy all the way up to the deadline. So when people think, 'oh yeah, they're just holding stuff back' I can say with good authority, being one of the people creating these guys, that no, we stuck with the original 30 up until the final day, when we had to ship this product off, and literally the next day, went hard to work on the DLC guys.

Now of course, it's easy for marketing to grab images of these guys and put them out there and go, 'hey look, here's the DLC we've got planned!' and people will misinterpret that as we've already got them but that's definitely not the case.

4. GAMES ARE TOO EASY

Forums say games are getting easier nowadays. As a developer of *Dead Rising 2*, one of the tougher games, what's your take on it?

JASON LEIGH

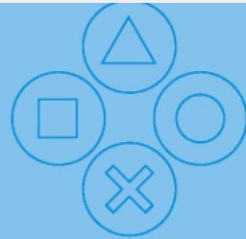
Executive producer, *Dead Rising 2: Off The Record*

That's the second time I've been asked that question today and it's a very interesting one. I think that games have become more about people wanting a unique experience and a very intense experience. They become less about a challenge. The kind of games that sell now and the kind of games that do very well are the ones where someone comes in, they get sucked into a world and through a story, they come out the other end and go, 'wow, I never experienced something like that'.

Whereas I think in the past, gamers would have thought, 'what's the hard game, where's the challenge, how am I going to prove myself?' So it's definitely morphed. But at the same time we've now got interesting things like Trophies and so on, where there's still that hardcore aspect for gamers, where they want to get all of the achievements, and they want to be challenged.

So with *Dead Rising 2* being one of the tougher games out there, we're a little bit proud of that. At the same time, for *Off The Record*, we're doing what we can to take some of the rough edges where there were spikes in difficulty to try and flatten that out.





5. GAME STORIES ARE BAD

“Stories tend to be written poorly in videogames, compared to other media. Do you think that’s a fair criticism?”

FEARGUS URQUHART

CEO, Obsidian

Whatever you’re trying to do, whether it’s *SpongeBob SquarePants* as a cartoon for children or it’s MI5 or it’s a book or *Harry Potter* or a game – how you tell your story and the story itself all has to do with what makes sense for that representation that you’re attempting to give to the person who is going to be absorbing it.

Could stories be better? Yes, not just in games but in books, movies and TV. I think that when it comes to games themselves, because we focus on immersing the player and putting them in this gameplay experience, then stories can fall by the wayside more than they should. We don’t always think about them enough, and they can feel bolted on later. Certain games will bring in a writer that doesn’t actually work for the company, and that writer will try to create this thing that ties it all together, but since it’s being done after the fact it’s going to feel flat.

But, on the flip side, if you log the number of hours that people played *Call Of Duty* in single-player versus the number of hours that people played in multiplayer – would the players ultimately want whatever resources it took to put the story in, let’s say they had to quadruple them to make the story substantially better, would it be better if those resources were invested in the hours they played in multiplayer, or the hours that they put into single-player, which is not that many? So I think a lot of it is about does it make sense for this? Does it make sense to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to make the story better when the game doesn’t actually need it?

Now story in RPGs does matter, because it’s you in this world, and this is the thing that you’re following, and the reward is the completion of the plot and the story. So they have to be written better, and that’s why we have writers on staff and our own VO producer and why it’s a focus that we talk about every day. In the end it just has to do with what we want the player to get out of it. In *COD* they don’t necessarily care that they’re going to get a great story out of it because all their hours are going into multiplayer. Most of the hours players are going to put into *Dungeon Siege III* are following a story, so that’s why it’s important. I’m not saying *COD* has bad story! [laughs] But I can understand why they would put less resources into it than we would.

6. WOMEN ARE SEX OBJECTS

“The games industry tends to portray women as little more than T&A. Do you think it’s a problem with the industry at large?”

JONATHAN JACQUES-BELLETETE

Art director, *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*

It’s actually something that we said straight from the beginning that we didn’t want to get into. Because what’s important to me is not making a photorealistic game or just re-creating reality the way it is. What’s important to me is to make the game credible, and credibility has nothing to do with photorealism. In fact, photorealism in games does not make it credible at all. Because of that, I was kind of like, you know, those big bimbos with big boobs and skimpy clothes... for credibility’s sake we wanted to stay away from all that. Even to the point where the game director, one day he was like, ‘Come on. But that girl, though. Give her big boobs! Just her! Come on!’ [laughs] And that ended up Eliza, the news anchor. But, definitely in this game there’s no over-sexualisation of any female game characters whatsoever.

As far as the industry is concerned, things are a little too much, maybe. Especially with the booth babes. You can’t be taken seriously when you’re trying to sell a product, but what you’re also saying is what’s going to attract people to your booth is half-naked women and not your product itself. I’ve never really got it... I get it when I go to bike shows, though. That’s fine [laughs] But I don’t get it with games.



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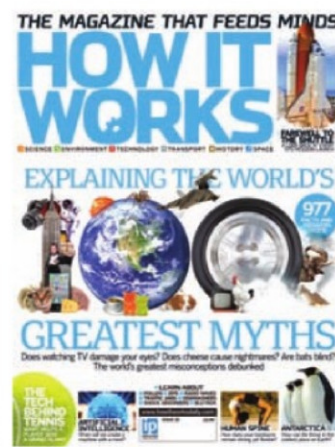
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PLAY MAG Reviews

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Playing bad games so you don't have to

Including: Duke Nukem Forever – was it worth the wait? /// It didn't take 14 years to make inFamous 2 /// Or 14 minutes to make Kung Fu Panda 2

82 Duke Nukem Forever PS3

84 inFamous 2 PS3

86 Alice: Madness Returns PS3

87 Hunted: The Demon's Forge PS3

88 Shadows Of The Damned PS3

90 Red Faction: Armageddon PS3

92 White Knight Chronicles II PS3

93 Super Street Fighter IV:
Arcade Edition PS3

94 Kung Fu Panda 2 PS3

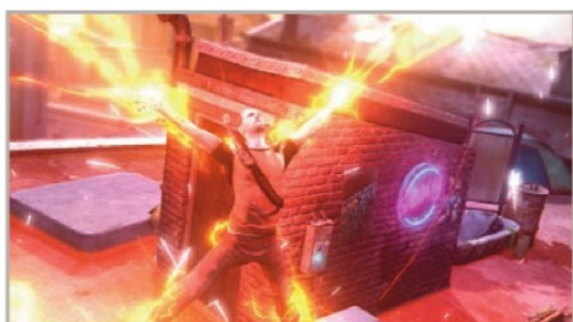
94 Arcana Heart 3 PS3

82 Duke Nukem Forever

Fail to the king baby



on review



84 inFamous 2 PS3

Which side will you pick?



88 Shadows Of The Damned PS3

Big boners and naked women



93 SSFIV: Arcade Edition PS3

Evil Ryu versus Good Ken

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RELEASE DATE: 1998 [LULZ]

Duke Nukem Forever

And to think we actually hoped this would be half-decent



Initial work started on *Duke Nukem Forever* way back in 1996. In the 15 years that has passed since then, at no point did anybody involved in the development of the game – in any of its many guises – bother giving two NPCs playing pool idle animations. Instead they just stand there, looking vacant, forgotten bystanders in a tumultuous and ultimately pointless development cycle.

Duke Nukem Forever is Definitely Brilliant and certainly not Absolutely Awful. No siree, not this game

Why point this out? Oh, no reason – after all, *Duke Nukem Forever* is Definitely Brilliant and certainly not Absolutely Awful. No siree, not this game.

That's a lie, by the way. It's horrible. Awful, rubbish, terrible garbage. Really, it is.

We wanted to frame this review from the perspective of our 14-year-old selves – roughly the age we would have been when *DNF* was initially meant to come out. It would take you on a hilarious ride through how we were endlessly amused by Duke's antics, how we were impressed by the mechanics and settings, and how the graphics were "well 3D, like". It would be both a hilarious send-up of the game's time in development and bring warmth to the usual cold, hard criticism *Play* offers up. We wanted to do that. Then the game had to actually arrive in the office and turn out to be so

awful that even our made-up teenage selves want to vomit all over the box rather than play any more of it. Best laid plans, and all that.

What you're confronted with in *DNF* is a boring slog through wave after wave of identikit enemies – no new introductions



DETAILS

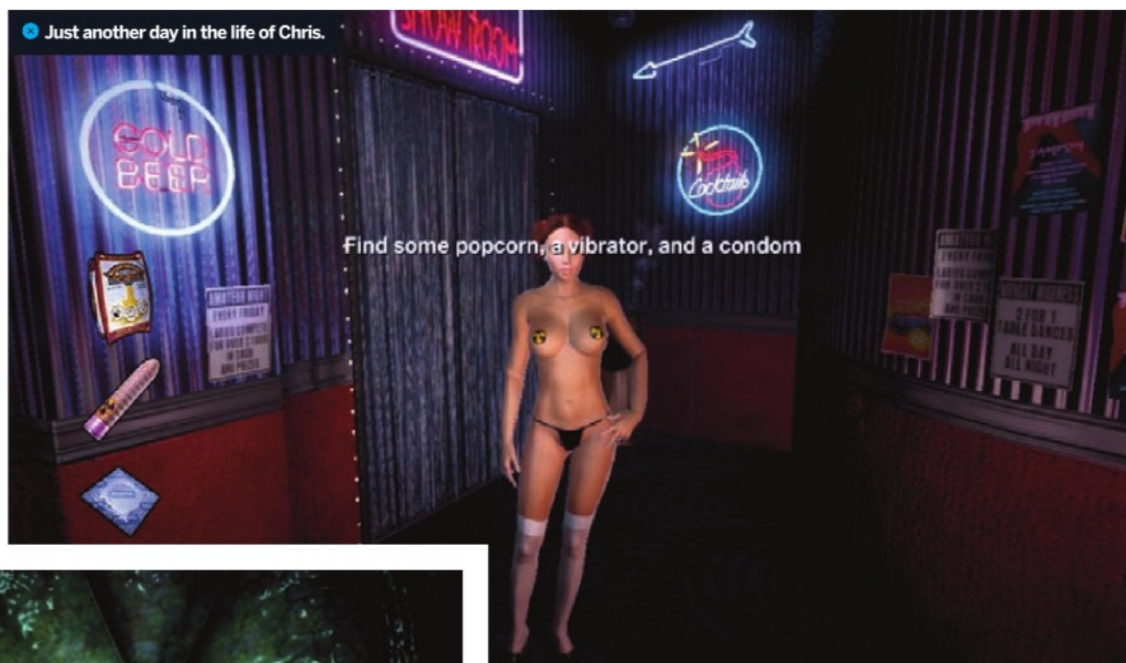
Publisher
2K Games
Developer
Gearbox
Software/3D Realms
Price
£49.99
Players
1-8
Genre
FPS
Age Rating
18
Website
dukenukemforever.com
Twitter
@GearboxSoftware
Facebook
http://on.fb.me/ILWips

since *Duke 3D* (they probably didn't have enough time to create new enemies). Twitchy, imprecise aiming takes centre stage in frustrating combat, where you *will* be blindsided repeatedly, cover will not function even though the game expects you to duck in and out of it to recharge Duke's 'ego' (HA HA IT'S HIS SHIELD) and rather than offer anything of interest the game will just put you in a room and keep spawning enemies for a while until you've killed about 20 of them. Or died, again, and sat through the painfully long loading screen. It's a horrible mishmash of old and new, and none of it works well at all.

One of the 'new' elements to the game – the ability to only carry two weapons – just makes no sense. Seeing as the armoury is almost unchanged from *Duke 3D*, bar a couple of ignorable additions, this isn't a weapon set made with the ability to only carry two at any time in mind. They aren't balanced. You're *meant* to have all of them so you can experiment in combat – you're not meant to be hamstrung to the point where you're scared of carrying anything other than the Ripper and a rocket launcher. It's a hasty, pointless inclusion. But then that's to be expected – they didn't really have that long to think about things like weapon balance now, did they?

But we're not just ripping on *DNF* for being outdated, clumsily put together, ugly, boring, samey, a creative black hole, sexist in an unfunny way, entirely lacking in anything approaching satire, frustrating and too simple in equal measure or for being resolutely unfunny. We're also ripping on it because it's just *bad*. Once or twice we felt a pang of satisfaction, but this was replaced so quickly by the feeling that we'd rather be doing something – anything – else than





playing it. When a game makes you feel like you don't want to be playing it, it's probably doing something wrong.

It's not an original point, but it's still one that resonates: in the time since *Duke Nukem Forever* was announced, *Battlefield*, *Call Of Duty*, *Halo*, *Uncharted*, *Gears Of War*, *Medal Of Honor*, *Deus Ex*, *Half-Life*, *BioShock*, *Borderlands*, *Brothers In Arms*, *Bulletstorm*, *Fallout 3*, *Dead Space*, *Crysis*, *Far Cry*, *Condemned*, *Rainbow Six Vegas*, *Mirror's Edge*, *Killzone*, *Portal*, *Team Fortress 2*, *Homefront*, *Resistance*, *Red Faction*, *Resident Evil 4*, *The Darkness*, *Chronicles Of Riddick* and *Vanquish* were all created, released and enjoyed by the world. And that's just a list off the top of our heads combined with a quick glance at the Playlist. We know there are more than just these. All that time, all those half-decent-to-great games, and at the end of it all – to bookend it – we get this turd on a disc.

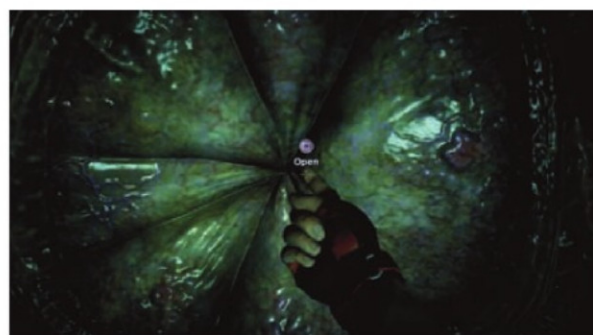
Duke Nukem Forever isn't just bad, it's irrelevant. It doesn't work as an old-school shooter, it doesn't work as a historical document taking us through the development process and it certainly doesn't work in today's gaming world. It would be a shame, but that would insinuate we actually give a single crap about this complete toss. As one of the monkeys from another magazine remarked: the king is dead.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Not only is *Duke Nukem Forever* not worth the wait, it's not worth *any* wait. Ten years ago it would have been bad. 15 years ago it wouldn't have been worth playing. Today? It's a joke, and one that's just not funny.

33%

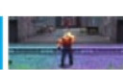


TOO HARSH?

Nostalgia is not a defence in the eyes of Play

THERE HAVE BEEN defences made for *Duke Nukem Forever*, with the main thrust of the collective argument being 'you can't judge it by traditional standards'. You're wrong if you think that. We take into account the excruciating wait for the game and how there's some kind

of mystique surrounding it all – and how powerful nostalgia can be – but the fact remains it's just a bad game. Ignoring the fact that Other Games exist and assigning *DNF* a larger score as a result would be doing a disservice to our readers. We absolutely will not go down that route.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

inFamous 2

Formerly known as 'Electro Fizzbitch: Furious Boogaloo'. Possibly



Electro-hovering around a fictional city, blasting pedestrians with electro-missiles and generally being an electro-douchebag: all in a day's work here. Or, you know, you can be 'good' if you want and let those pathetic, normal human beings go about their business. Either way, you're probably going to have fun with *inFamous 2*.

Bringing many of the powers earned through the first game into the second – and making them available from the get-go – is the first sign that Sucker Punch isn't staffed by morons.

Cole MacGrath takes his electro-hero (or lightning-bastard)

ways to New Marais, a take on post-Katrina New Orleans, in order to prepare himself for an inevitable battle against an enemy known simply as The Beast. The story does a job, sets the scene, gives you reasons to electrocute human statues – but not much else. It's very basic, though it gets the job done.

While this is a series that places a lot of its focus on a morality system, it's not exactly the kind of subtle, grey-area-covering, deep and intelligent portrayal of humankind's struggle to control the beast within we're so used to seeing in other games. Oh, no,



wait – we mistook games for having any competence in that regard. No, *inFamous 2* follows that well-trodden path of presenting

What we're saying is this: evil is more fun than good

you with two options 'don't kill all the babies' or 'kill all the babies with electric fury'. Some choices are actually quite interesting, but it's really not a system to do much more than make your electrical powers a different colour, make people react to you in various ways, open up different missions and hand down a choice of powers. What we're saying is this: evil is more fun than good.

Movement might initially take you aback, feeling flaky as it does in the early stages. Player character Cole will break into a sprint at the merest touch of the analogue stick,



Damn straight it's sexy.



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
Sucker Punch
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
Action-adventure
Age Rating
16
Website
infamous2thegame.com
Twitter
@SuckerPunchProd
Facebook
http://on.fb.me/jF7FBg

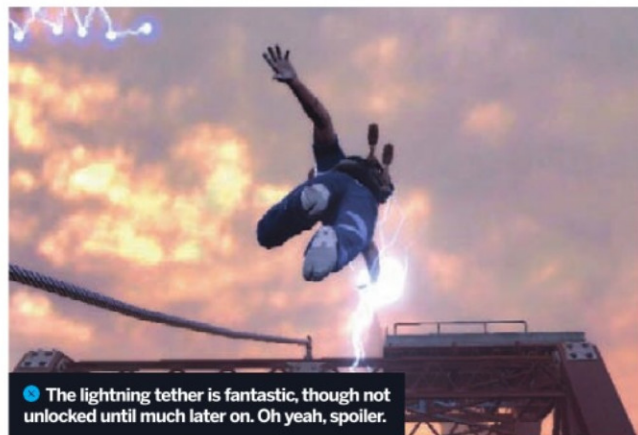
automatically jump little jumps in a stupid, annoying fashion and sometimes miss grabbing ledges for no bloody reason. But soon enough you learn your way around these niggles, and by later stages in the game – with a few new powers implemented – the flowing, balletic fashion in which you navigate the city of New Marais is genuinely thrilling.

For all its hypnotic, addictive qualities, *inFamous 2* does flounder somewhat in certain areas. The aforementioned control issues can make things feel imprecise and lead to some irritating loops of attempting to climb a surface, not grabbing a ledge for some reason, falling down and repeating. Then, of course, there's Cole's inability to take a step of two inches down without the player having to press the $\odot$ button. They're issues that don't crop up all the time and they are easy to get used to – foibles is a great word for it – but it's worth pointing out as an irritant.

Melee combat is another area we found wanting, especially when faced with multiple enemies. Cole's auto-targeting sometimes out and out misses enemies for no discernible reason, and when battling a handful or more you're going to get constantly and consistently blindsided. In other words: keep some range. Still – again – it's an irritant.

Cole sounds like Martin Sheen, too, but we can't say for sure whether that's also an irritant or not.

Easily the most unexpected addition to *inFamous 2* comes in the shape of the user-generated content, or UGC. What we thought when we heard it was coming to the game ended up being very little like what it actually is – not exactly *LittleBigPlanet 2* levels of freedom to make what you want, but a damn sight more complex than expected. Basically,

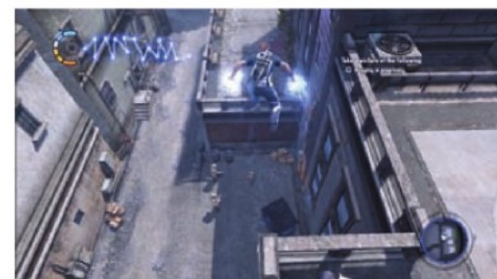


The lightning tether is fantastic, though not unlocked until much later on. Oh yeah, spoiler.



Melee combat is usually fine, but sometimes targeting is flaky.

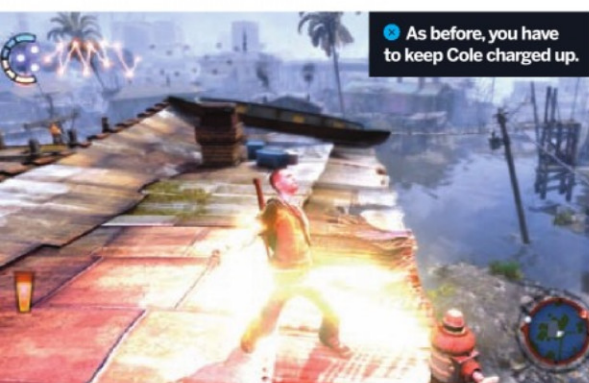




DISCLAIMER

Didn't like it last time: won't like it this time

IT MAY SEEM like a bit of a cop-out to say this, but there are people out there that won't enjoy *inFamous 2* so much. From a very basic mechanics standpoint not much has changed – new moves have been introduced, but generally speaking it's very similar to the last one. While that's not a massively bad thing, it does bring up two pertinent issues: first, that people who did not like the original will not like this one. Second, we're a bit disappointed that a few niggly little problems haven't been fixed since the first game. Just a few things to bear in mind.



you can't re-create complete new cityscapes to play about in, but you can create whole missions in a multitude of ways, mucking about with the game's logic, physics, behavioural programming and whatever else you need to modify to make your perfect mission. We opted for tasking the world with saving a stage full of dancing tramps from some angry mercenaries. We're not that creative. Safe to say, there'll be a great deal of interesting content coming out of the UGC feature in months to come.

inFamous 2 is, in the most part, a sequel by numbers. It's more of the same, it's more graphically impressive, it continues where it left off and more moves and ways to hilariously electrocute enemies have been introduced. At the same time it still suffers from some issues

that we would have hoped to be ironed out the second time around. All the same, it's capable of putting you into the 'waking coma' style of play that comes with open-world titles of this ilk, and if you let it wash over you, you will be collecting those damn blast shards for weeks and months to come.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Better the original in many ways, but **simply doesn't improve on it in some others.** User-generated content and a thoroughly addictive nature make *inFamous 2* a game you should definitely look at picking up though, even with its rough edges.

83%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Alice: Madness Returns

In a bizarre world it's weird to be normal



DETAILS

Publisher EA
Developer Spicy Horse
Price £49.99
Players 1
Genre Action adventure
Age Rating 15
Website www.ea.com/alice
Twitter @spicy_horse
Facebook facebook.com/alicemadnessreturns



You need to help The Hatter – he's been disassembled, with his arms being used to pour molten metal in a workshop and his legs powering a giant hamster wheel. If you can reassemble him then maybe he'll be able to help you find out what happened years ago when your house burned down, killing your family and leaving you a mentally scarred orphan. So how do we go about doing that?

Well, you do some basic platforming, press some switches, fight waves of three different types of enemy and work out some very basic puzzles (find a switch/hold **R2** until you see where to go).

It's so very rudimentary when you look beyond the setting, story and cut-scenes

If we were more willing to take flights of fancy – ironic we're not in the world of Wonderland – we might speculate that American McGee and Spicy Horse are actually satirising our expectations of what a game based in a twisted version of Lewis Carroll's



It seems most of the game is spent hovering on these things.



Combat sums it up: interesting weapons and enemies, bland execution.



Smoking is bad, kids. Also it's cool.



Yes, there's even a shmup section. And it's entirely unnecessary.

Alice stories would be like. We would expect it to be utterly bizarre, totally wanton and coming across as if it was the result of a two-month acid binge.

We sincerely doubt our speculation will turn out to be true, though. No, *Alice: Madness Returns* falls into similar traps the original game (included here as DLC) did – it's so very rudimentary when you look beyond the setting, story and cut-scenes.

But if things were just a bit bland, mechanics-wise, we would be more forgiving. The fact that there are genuine issues with things makes us a lot... well, less forgiving. Combat often ends up as a complete clusterfuck thanks to a decidedly shonky targeting system and unresponsive controls. The latter comes into play when platforming, too, especially when *Madness Returns* decides to invoke one of its very frequent frame rate drops. Now, normally this is a mere cosmetic issue, but when the choppiness of the game actively stops jumps from being

registered, that's a real problem. As for the camera that randomly decides to show you *nothing important at all* when you're trying to hit a precise landing... well, the frustration boiled over a fair few times while playing, safe to say.

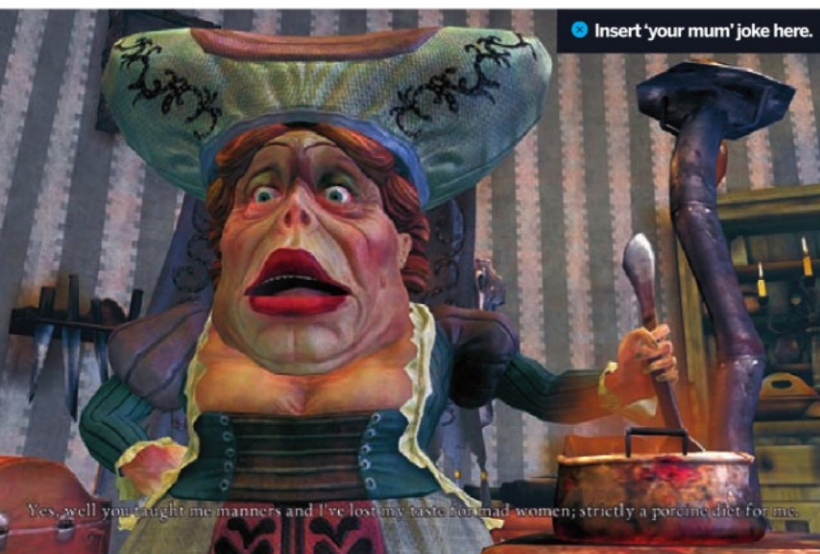
We would genuinely be interested in a transmedia approach here; it would mean we could avoid the whole 'boring and half-functional game' part. All the weird and wonderful settings in the world can't save your game if you get that bit wrong, and once again American McGee has put his name to a videogame that falls flat.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

It's bizarre how such a creative take on an old tale surrounds what is, pretty much, the most ordinary game ever made. Aside from intense boredom, you'll also have to compete with shonky mechanics and intense frustration.

57%



Insert 'your mum' joke here.

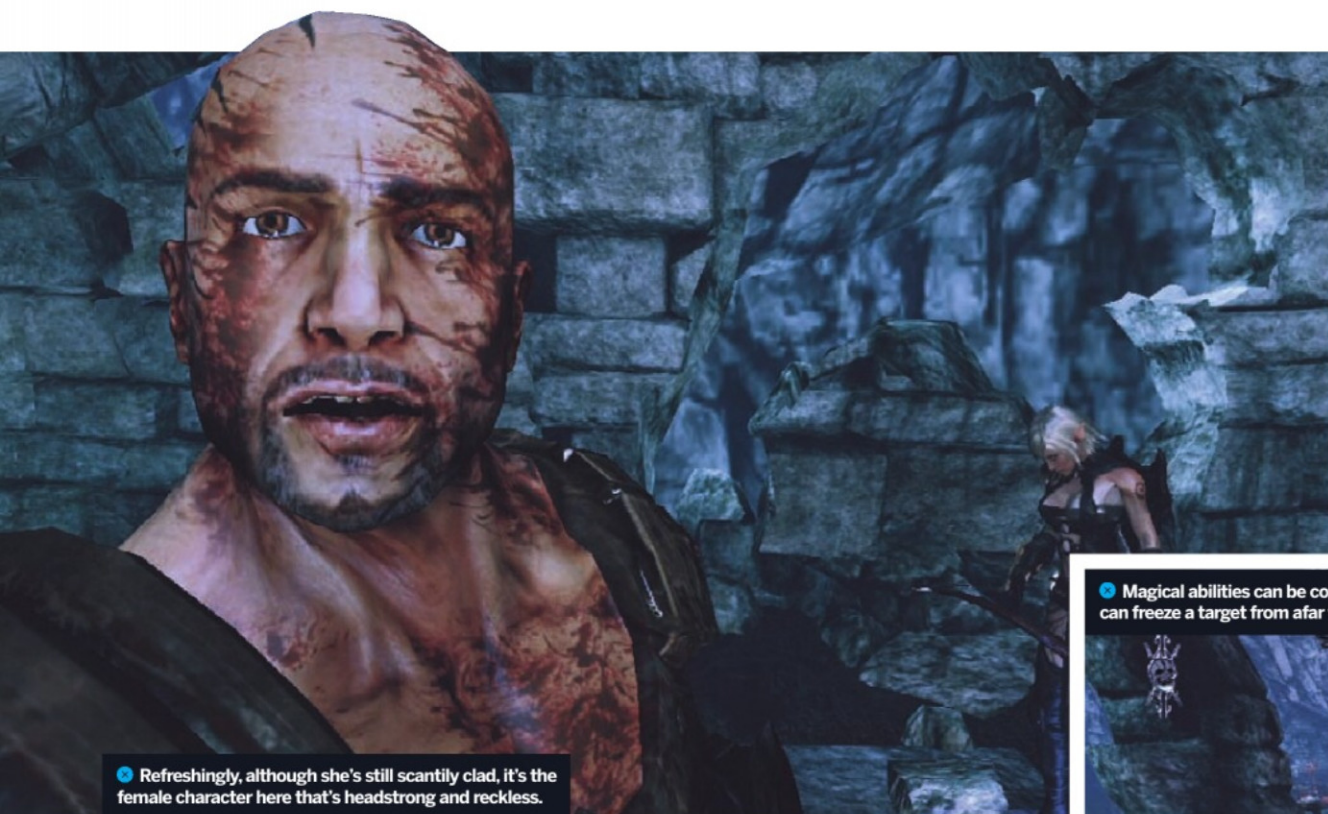


Where's The Hatter's hat? WHERE IS IT?

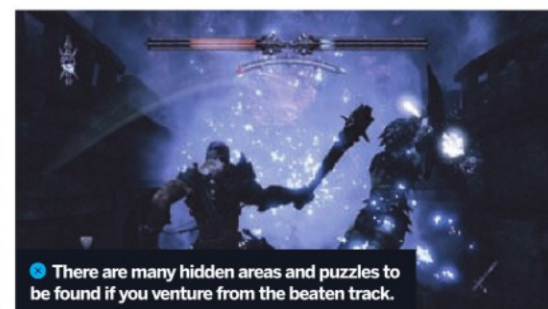
Or you could try



Bayonetta Issue 187
 What happens when you make an exciting action game with a mental story. 93%



● Refreshingly, although she's still scantily clad, it's the female character here that's headstrong and reckless.



● There are many hidden areas and puzzles to be found if you venture from the beaten track.



● Magical abilities can be combined – for instance, E'lara can freeze a target from afar for Caddoc to use his dash on.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Hunted: The Demon's Forge

The inaction-RPG



DETAILS

Publisher
Bethesda Softworks
Developer
inXile Entertainment
Players
1-2
Genre
Action-RPG
Age Rating
18
Website
www.huntedthegame.com
Twitter
@InXile_Ent
Facebook
www.facebook.com/inxile.entertainment



As a developer Bethesda is one of the best companies around, delivering on both quality and content with every game it releases. As a publisher, however, it's something of a different story, better titles like *Brink* and *Fallout: New Vegas* sharing a library with the likes of *WET* and *Rogue Warrior*.

Although *Hunted: The Demon's Forge's* style and genre seems more consistent with Bethesda's self-developed output, in terms of quality it falls in with the latter two titles. It's not as abjectly dire as *Rogue Warrior*, but it still feels uninspired and lacking in originality throughout.

We can imagine the marketing pitch now. All the company executives sat around a table – one stands, straightens his tie, and says, "It's *Gears Of War* but with fantasy RPG elements. Lunch?"

That's basically the design brief. *Hunted* borrows a lot of features from not just *Gears Of War* but third-person games in general. There's the cover system ubiquitous in the

action-adventure genre; a 'left trigger to aim, right to fire' mechanic; little touches like the cinematic animations that occur when squeezing through gaps or jumping over drops – an idea pinched straight from our own *Nathan Drake*.

There are RPG elements that govern your abilities and how powerful they are, as well as magical swords and bows. However, weapons are gained by simply picking them up off the ground, and skills and magic are bought using crystals at upgrade points.

There are no menus or spreadsheets here – *Hunted* is more *Resident Evil 4* than it is *Dragon Age*.

The comparisons are rarely flattering. The cover system is too sticky, the environments far too similar, and firing a bow and arrow is never as satisfying as an AK-47, even when you do splat some heads with a well-aimed shot. But conversely the melee combat can be involving when it demands the use of careful blocking and striking at the right moment, and taking on tougher foes presents an enjoyable challenge.

Feels uninspired and lacking in originality throughout

The co-op, too, is well-implemented, with levels often offering high points for an archer to provide overwatch while the brawler takes on the ork-like foes more directly below. With both online and offline co-op available it's what keeps *Hunted* from being completely ignorable, having a friend by your side making the rubbish story and pitiful voice acting something to laugh at rather than criticise.

Hunted is not a terrible game, but it's far from being a brilliant one. When a game comes under the name of Bethesda and labels itself an RPG we expect something great. *Hunted* isn't. But here, the feeling is one more of dissatisfaction rather than of outright antipathy.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

Hunted is a so-so action-RPG that's hard to recommend, but also difficult to condemn outright. If its environments were a little more varied and its story better fleshed out it would certainly receive a higher score. But they're not. So it won't.

59%





RELEASE DATE: 24 JUNE

Shadows Of The Damned

Read all about my Big Boner

PS3 In a recent interview the unconventional *Shadows Of The Damned* creator Suda51 said, "I think the Hell that they have is really mainstream and standard." By 'they' he was referring to the design team at Visceral Games, and the vision of Hell they constructed for last year's *Divine Comedy*-inspired hack-'n'-slash *Dante's Inferno*. "I think our vision of Hell is really different from theirs," continued Suda51. "It would be interesting as you play to see the difference."

This definitely wasn't interviewee hyperbole. Garcia Hotspur's quest to save his girlfriend from the clutches of the evil demon Fleming does indeed make Dante's ordeal look like a stroll through the Marks & Spencer's underwear section. Don't let the quaint Eastern European-looking environments of Suda51's Hell distract you, though. This place is absolutely *bonkers*. From doing battle with a goat-headed giant who rides a human-headed horse to blasting down giant demons with your 'Big Boner', *Shadows Of The Damned* presents an underworld that's at once bewildering, humorous and grotesque.

Even the game mechanics are wrapped up in a layer of weirdness that only Suda51 could

ever conjure up. Or, at the very least, deem acceptable to appear in a videogame. Doors aren't opened with keys, but by slamming huge strawberries into crying babies' faces. Checkpoints are marked by glowing white eyeballs excreting a flaming poo onto the floor. Your shopkeeper is a huge demon-human hybrid with a Texan accent named Christopher. You clear a room of energy-draining darkness by shooting a bleating goat head on the wall. There's only one way we can really encapsulate all of this in one sentence – this is some crazy ass shit, yo.

The game itself plays very much akin to the Capcom classic *Resident Evil 4*. At its core *Shadows Of The Damned* is third-person adventuring by the numbers – intense

There's only one way we can really encapsulate all of this in one sentence – this is some crazy ass shit, yo

pockets of action occasionally punctuated by massive hit-the-glowing-weak-spot boss battles and puzzles that are solved by pushing, pulling and rotating huge chunks of scenery or utilising the energy-draining darkness we mentioned earlier.

The blue-purple darkness in question will descend occasionally and consumes a reserve stock of energy and then your

Suda51 loves to reference films. Look out for the numerous nods to *The Evil Dead*.



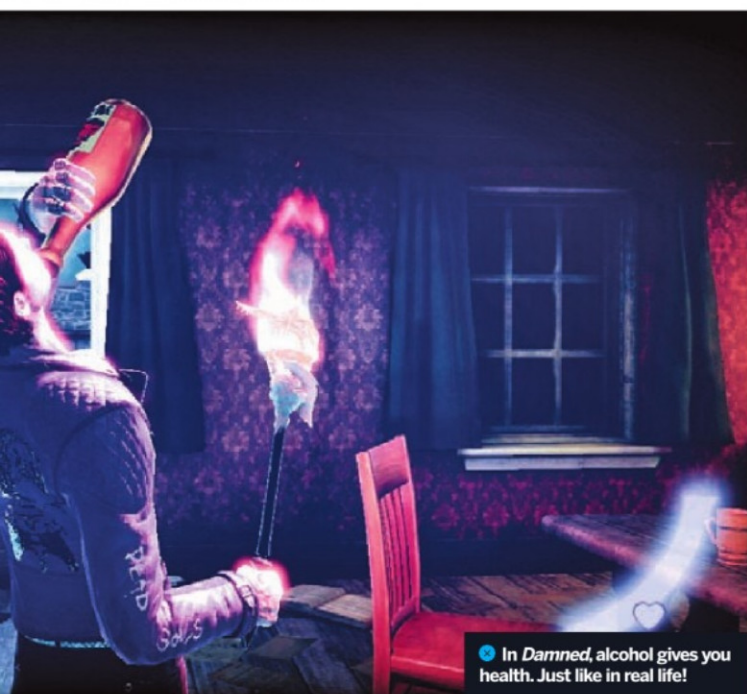
DETAILS

Publisher
Electronic Arts
Developer
Grasshopper Manufacture
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
Action adventure
Age Rating
18
Website
www.ea.com/shadows-of-the-damned
Twitter
[@Grasshopper_EN](https://twitter.com/Grasshopper_EN)
Facebook
facebook.com/grasshopper.manufacture

life bar whenever you're inside of it. It also sheathes enemies in a protective layer of shadow, which you must dissolve with a blast of light before you can do any damage. You can use this same technique to light lanterns or goat heads and lift the darkness, but in some cases keeping it around is actually beneficial. Some larger enemies are instantly killed if you trigger the darkness yourself (by releasing small critters from cages who will activate it if left to their own devices), and occasionally you'll be tasked with tracking vines that extend from creeper plants that block doors (or, as Garcia jokingly refers to them, "demon pubes"). The only way to remove these tendrils is to follow the roots to a bulbous seed and destroy it, which can only be achieved when shrouded in darkness. This way, the game forces you to plow headfirst into the life-threatening shadow, making for some tense puzzle-solving.

Shinji Mikami's influence (who took on the role of creative producer on *Shadows Of The Damned*) can be felt in the combat, particularly in ex-demon sidekick Johnson, who, like *Vanquish*'s BLADE, can morph into three different weapons on command. All three can receive minor upgrades such as increased reload speed or damage via red gems, while the far rarer blue gems reward





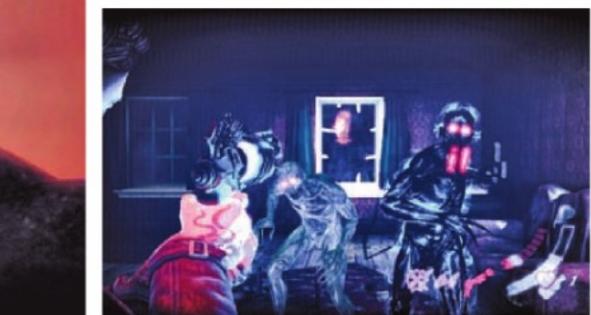
• In *Damned*, alcohol gives you health. Just like in real life!

BED TIME STORY

Guaranteed to give you nightmares

THROUGHOUT SHADOWS OF *The Damned* you'll encounter large Brothers Grimm-esque manuscripts, the reading of which will reveal the dark fairy-tale story behind whatever boss you're about to fight next. One details a young boy who swallows a harmonica, while another... well, we won't spoil them here. They're macabre and imaginative – like something Tim Burton would write – but they're given an extra layer of humour in the manner in which they're read aloud by Garcia or Johnson. The two will squabble and argue when reading, while Garcia – who appears only semi-illiterate – will often comically mispronounce words he finds difficult.

• We initially considered Johnson to be a rubbish version of *Portal 2*'s Wheatley, but we soon warmed to him.



major upgrades that significantly alter your weapons. Your 'Teether', which fires demon teeth, will upgrade from a simple machine gun to something akin to a minigun, and finally to a lock-on minigun. The 'Skullcrusher', meanwhile, will eventually be able to fire huge bomb-like craniums.

It's your 'Boner' that receives the most ridiculous upgrade, however. Call a sex line and Johnson turns into a 'Big Boner', which Garcia holds as if he were grasping his penis and blasts down massive demons in a shooting gallery section. "Taste my hot boner!" he exclaims after every shot. Quite.

As funny as this sounds, it's actually one of *Damned*'s worst sections, simply because it repeats too often and becomes a chore rather than a reason for mirth. Difficulty spikes rear their ugly head throughout the game, too, such as sections in which your undead girlfriend Paula chases you down a corridor. You'll find yourself not only having to restart these sections several times, but being forced to watch the same short cut-scene and hear the same tiring dialogue every time you re-attempt. That's poor design right there.

To be brutally honest, if we're to compare *Damned* to another Visceral game, it must be said that the game lacks the production values and sense of polish evident in *Dead*



• *Silent Hill* composer Akira Yamaoka's soundtrack is at once mellow, abrasive and brilliant.

Space 2. But *Damned* still excels in many other areas. It may have fewer weapons, but the variation in enemy design is much broader and thus leads to more interesting encounters. It may be puerile in its humour, but it's so ridiculous you'll find yourself laughing against all better judgement. Even if you stripped away all the absurd art design and removed all the jokes, you'd still have a reasonable shooter with good rhythm, flow, and although a little repetitive, one that remains meaty and satisfying throughout.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

The jokes are undeniably immature and the gameplay *slightly* repetitive, but *Shadows Of The Damned* remains that most rare of jokes – one that's still funny even after the 50th time you've heard it.

79%



• Instant headshots are played in slow motion. Very satisfying.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Red Faction: Armageddon

Beating us over the head with the Hammer Of Disappointment



We had the fear about *Red Faction: Armageddon* from the very first time we were told it would abandon the sandbox principles of the previous entry to the series, *Guerrilla*. Having played it at numerous preview events, we were always convinced to hold back our cynicism – you could blow things up! Power suits! Hammers! It was enough to make us think that *maybe* our instincts were wrong here. We truly wish they had been.

Red Faction: Armageddon misses the point. It's as if Volition took notes on what made people enjoy *Guerrilla*, understood every element of 2009's appeal and then, for some bizarre reason, surgically excised the vast majority of these very things that made people want to play the game so much in the first place.

Relentlessness is one thing – the exhilaration of a seemingly endless, pitched battle on *Dead Space 2* hits the nail on the head and is something you dread for all the right reasons just as much as you look forward to it. *Armageddon*'s endless run-'n'-gunning against hundreds – *thousands* – of enemies is just plain boring. It's routine. There's no thrill to it and very little necessity for tactics or any real thinking. You don't

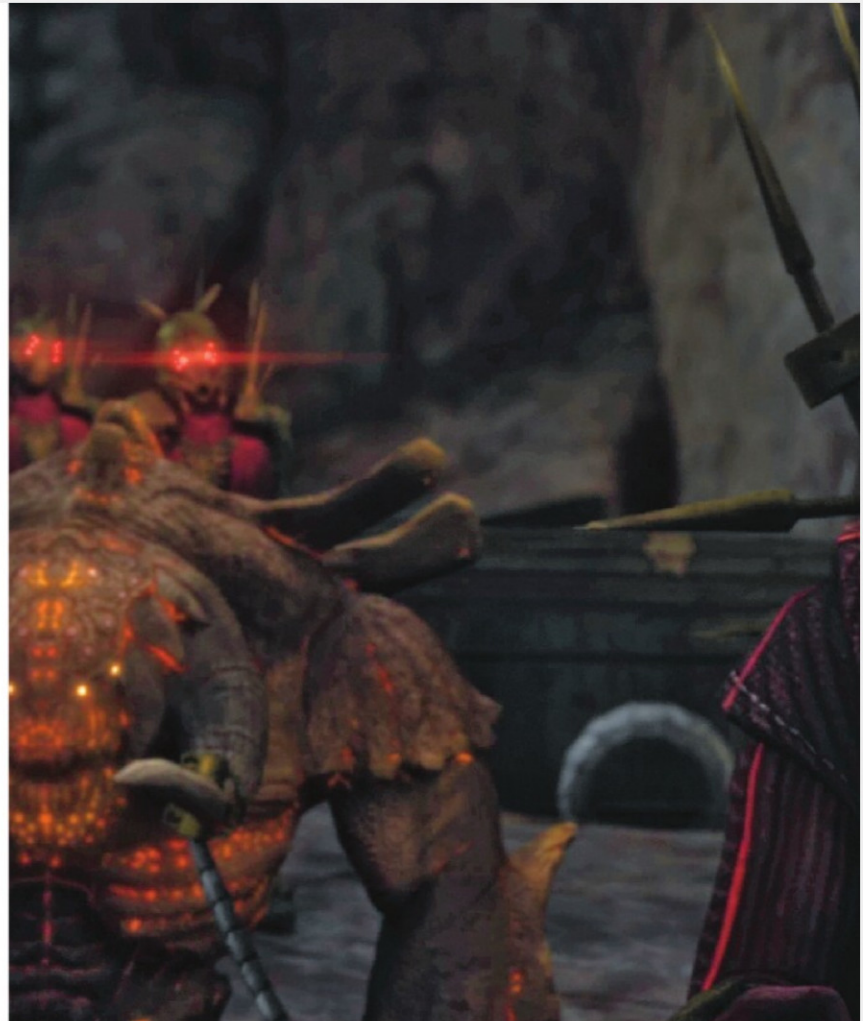
even have to aim very much, thanks to an overzealous auto-targeting system.

But let's bring some maths into play here: it took us seven hours and 14 minutes to finish our first playthrough of *Armageddon*. In that time we killed 2,651 enemies. That's around 6.1 kills a minute, which is about one kill *every ten seconds*. Take into account this doesn't include time spent conversing with SAM, Mason's on-wrist computer, or backtracking, or aimlessly wandering, or spending some time remembering why you're so disappointed with *Armageddon*. That is a lot of things to be killing, and it's a lot of things that absolutely never feel threatening at all to be killing. A bit more maths for you: no

Armageddon misses the mark of what we hoped for from a sequel by a wide margin

challenge + relentless waves of enemies = a very boring experience.

But probably the biggest issue with *Armageddon* is its linearity. Yes, *Guerrilla* lacked focus at times and could have done with being shored up somewhat. But not this much. There is scope to approach situations in *Armageddon* in two distinct ways: the right way and the wrong way. There's no room to improvise or mess about – no chance to strap five explosives to a truck and drive it through



DETAILS

Publisher
THQ
Developer
Volition Inc
Price
£49.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Third-person shooter
Age Rating
15
Website
www.redfaction.com
Twitter
@RedFaction
Facebook
facebook.com/VolitionInc

the front of a compound before jumping out, detonating it and bringing the rest of the building down with your hammer. And that's the worst thing of all – a lack of ability for the player to explore their destructive creativity.

All this negativity doesn't equate to the score at the end, and with good reason: it's not a broken experience. *Armageddon* is functional, if dull, and there are times when genuine smiles broke out on our faces. The magnet gun is a ray of light in an otherwise dark experience, allowing for some hilarious experimentation with destruction and new ways to kill the thousands of aliens you have to kill. In fact, it's so well done and so simple to use effectively that we... well, we have to admit it: we didn't use the hammer very much at all. The magnet gun is just better.

A brief vehicle section later in the game brought about even broader, longer-lasting smiles as it conjured up memories of the old *Descent* games. Some parts where you are placed in control of a mech suit or other wall of walking destruction may have dragged on a bit, or made it even easier to just wade through everything, but the *Descent*-y section was a very welcome distraction. The same can be said of Ruin mode, which allows players to either take on a score challenge or simply freely run about causing as much destruction as they can or want to. While it is great for the satisfaction of just blowing crap up, playing in Ruin mode is tinged with some sadness – sadness that you won't be doing a huge amount of this in the game proper. All the same, it's a welcome addition.

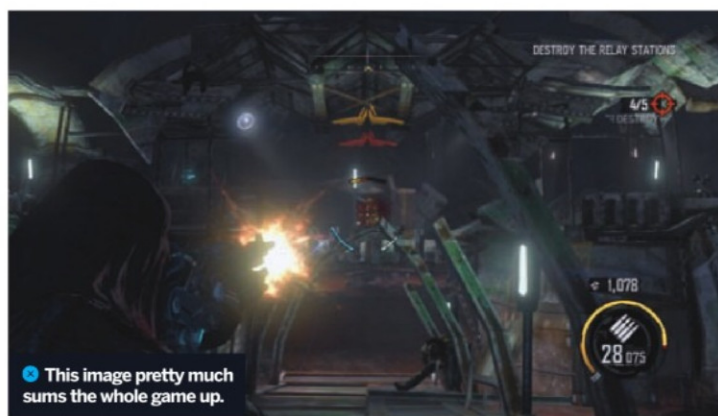
So *Armageddon* isn't all bad, but it misses the mark of what we hoped for from a sequel to *Guerrilla* by such a wide margin it's impossible for us to have any real enthusiasm for the game. Smaller in scale, linear, more focus on the bland story, massive



Or you
could try



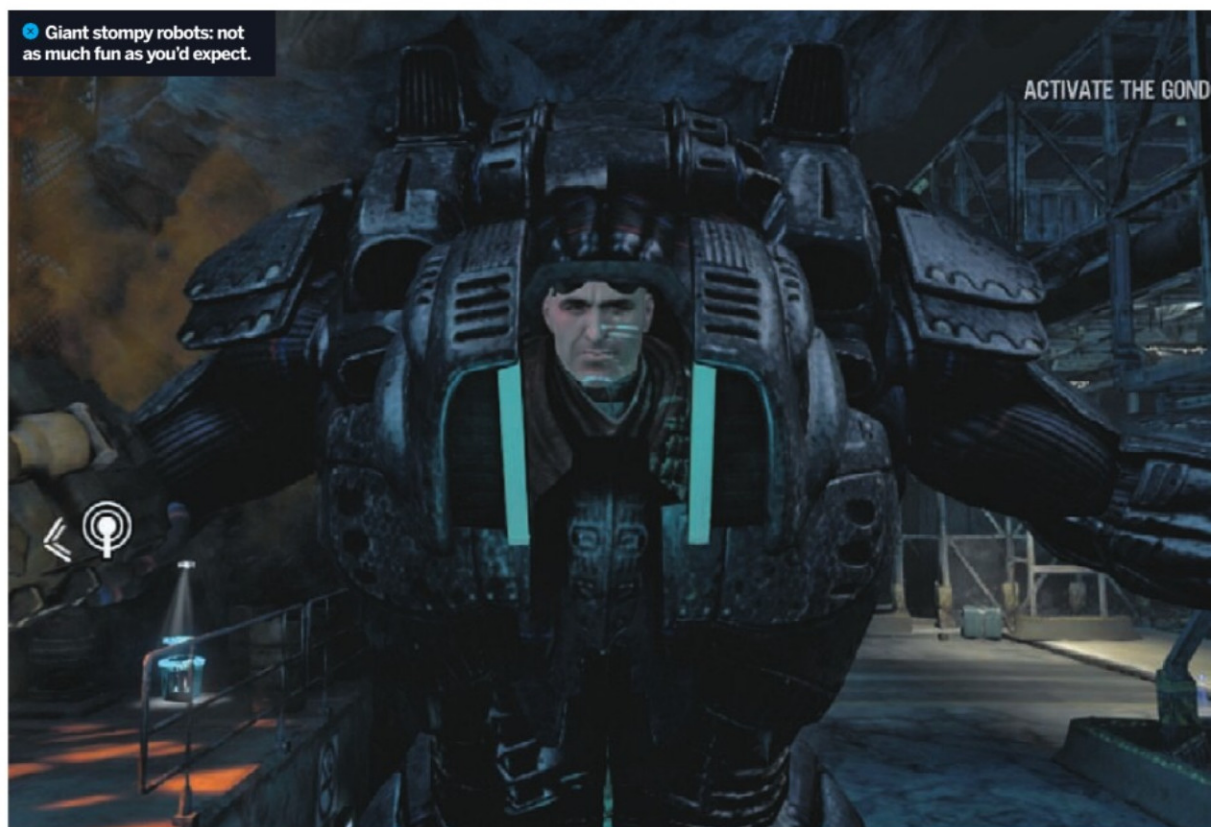
Dead Space 2 Issue 201
A clear influence on *Armageddon*.
Also a far better game. **92%**



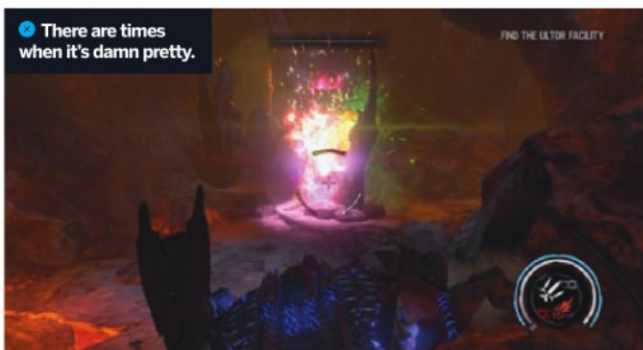
Red Faction: Armageddon

• This image pretty much sums the whole game up.

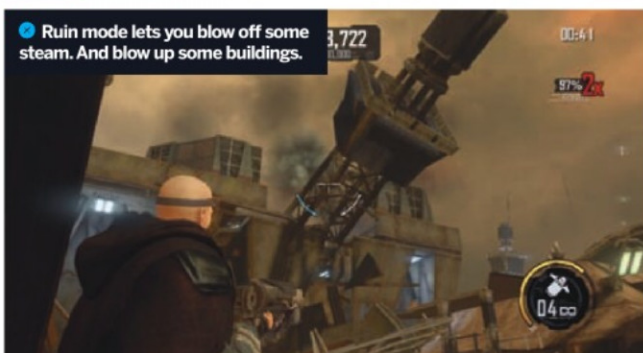
• Giant stompy robots: not as much fun as you'd expect.



• There are times when it's damn pretty.



• Ruin mode lets you blow off some steam. And blow up some buildings.



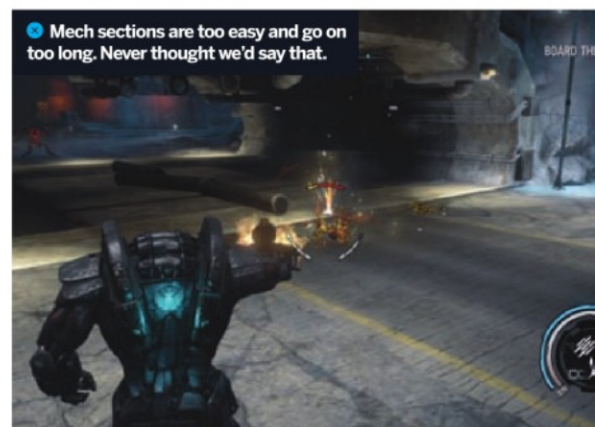
OBLIGATORY STORY BOXOUT

Generic coverage for a generic element

WE WOULD TRY to be clever, bucking the trend by not just having a separate boxout concerning *Red Faction: Armageddon*'s story. But originality and that whole 'being interesting' thing wouldn't really fit here, what with the tale told in *Armageddon* being such a banal pile of forgettable tosh. Darius Mason... terraformer blown up...

aliens released... love interest... Ultor Corporation... snore. *Red Faction: Guerrilla*'s story was arguably worse, but at least in that game you could distract yourself by dicking about. That option's simply not available in *Armageddon*, annoyingly. Oh, and not to ruin the ending, but the story seriously contradicts its own logic at its conclusion.

• Mech sections are too easy and go on too long. Never thought we'd say that.



amounts of combat (one of the worst elements of *Guerrilla*), much less freedom in how to approach situations – it's as if a checklist was made for all the best parts of the last game, with the sole intention of each and every one of them being taken out. If that was the objective for *Armageddon*, it's been achieved with gusto. And that makes us very sad indeed.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Armageddon misses the point of why people loved *Guerrilla* by such a phenomenal margin it's genuinely difficult to understand. It's not a terrible game, it's just bland, boring and loses the vast majority of factors that made the last game worth playing.

62%



RELEASE DATE: 10 JUNE

White Knight Chronicles II

White Knight Chroniclezzzzzzzzzz



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony
Developer
Level-5
Price
£49.99
Players
1-6
Genre
Action RPG
Age Rating
16
Website
<http://uk.playstation.com/white-knightchronicles/>
Twitter
@sceeblog
Facebook
<http://on.fb.me/jxSvTF>



White Knight Chronicles II took its sweet time to find a European release, having come out in Japan almost a whole year ago. Has the wait for the sequel to reach our shores been worth it? Well, no. Not really.

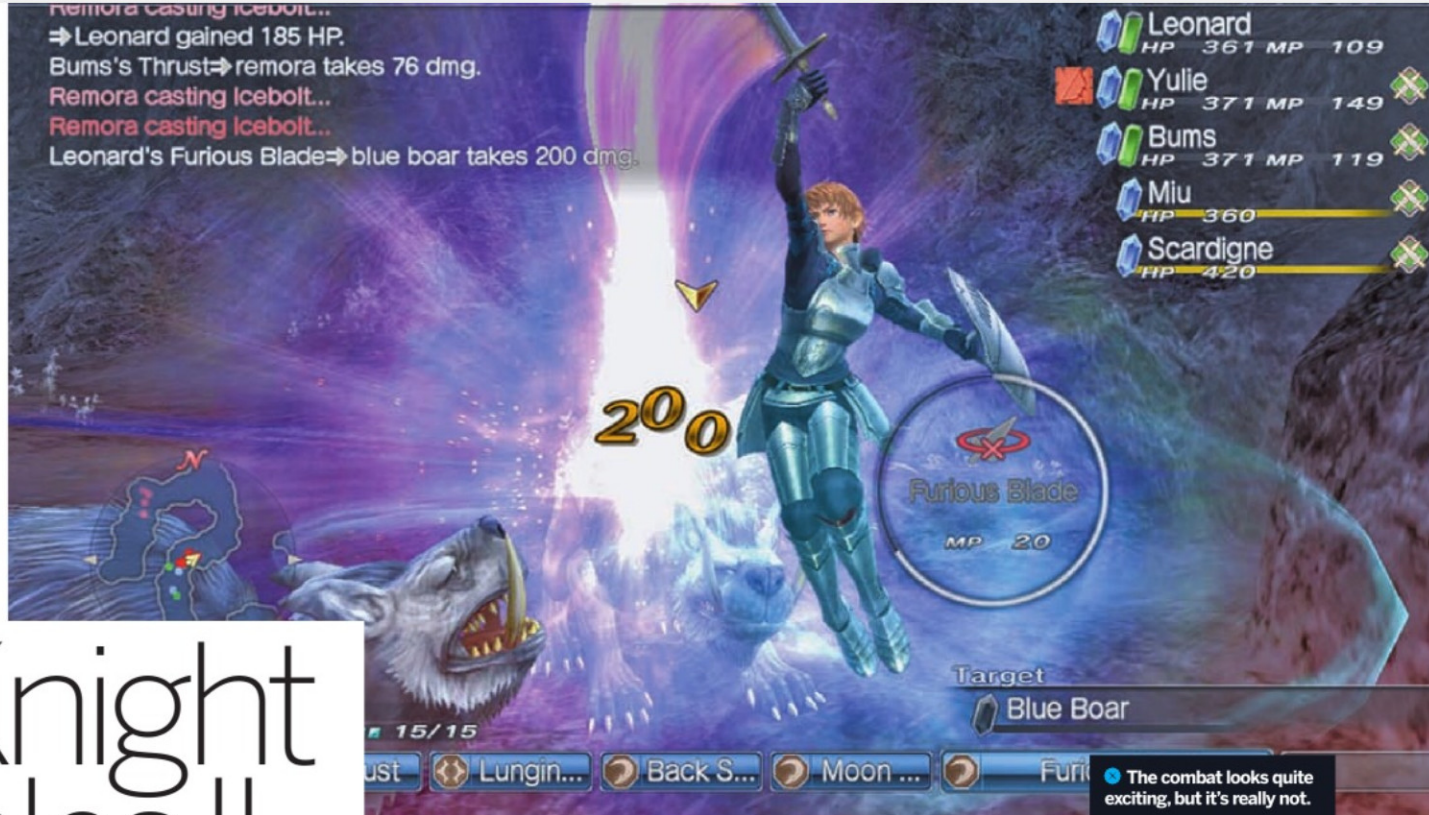
We have received a better version, though, it must be said. Both the European and Japanese releases include a complete copy of the original *White Knight Chronicles*, which is a rather generous addition. However, in Japan players required a finished save file on the first game in order to access the second. So, if you bought *White Knight Chronicles II* and hadn't played the first game, you would have to do so before you could play the

White Knight Chronicles II is the same as the first game bar a few minor tweaks to the formula

sequel. Just imagine if BioWare had tried that with *Mass Effect 3*.

Luckily, here in Europe you can jump into the second game straight away, either importing your original character if you happen to have one or starting afresh with

Remora casting Icebolt...
⇒ Leonard gained 185 HP.
Bums's Thrust⇒ remora takes 76 dmg.
Remora casting Icebolt...
Remora casting Icebolt...
Leonard's Furious Blade⇒ blue boar takes 200 dmg.



a level 35 character. Thank the lord, because if we were forced to play the first game again just to play this equally tiresome sequel we wouldn't be writing these words right now. We'd have slipped into a boredom-induced coma.

There's nothing overtly wrong with *White Knight Chronicles II*, there's just nothing obviously right about it either. It's the same as the first game bar a few minor tweaks to the formula.

You still initiate combat by targeting an enemy and picking what move you want to perform from a horizontal bar of commands. Chain combos are still customisable, and you can still transform into a seven-metre tall mega knight when faced with larger foes.

In the sequel positioning plays a bigger part in how effective your attacks are, with your proximity to an enemy affecting the amount

of damage you deal. Break attacks – a new addition – also allow you to concentrate on a particular limb to stun or incapacitate an enemy. This is quite useful in team play – which now supports six players – as one member of the group can focus on break attacks to give the team an advantage.

But despite these tweaks *White Knight Chronicles II* still makes the same mistakes as its predecessor. It fails to clearly explain its obscure mechanics, the online framework and cross-chat is outmoded, the story is even more bland than the first game's, and the whole experience is laboriously repetitive.

White Knight Chronicles II isn't broken; it's just tedious. You might consider the package good value as you get two games for the price of one, but when they're this uninspired we'd rather have neither.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

White Knight Chronicles II came out a whole year and a half after the first game in Japan. Unfortunately, Level-5 didn't do very much with that time, opting to release what feels more like an expansion than a genuine innovation.

49%



In this series



White Knight Chronicles Issue 190
It's more or less the exact same game as the sequel. **55%**



Evil Ryu and Oni will offer players something a little different to the simple yet versatile Ryu and Ken.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



Complaints have already been raised about being able to see what's going on for all of Oni's wild, odd-coloured flames.



DETAILS

Publisher
Capcom
Developer
In-house
Price
£29.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Beat-'em-up
Age Rating
12
Website
www.streetfighter.com
Twitter
@Capcom_Unity
Facebook
facebook.com/capcommunity

Super Street Fighter IV Arcade Edition

A third and final round for Capcom's fighter

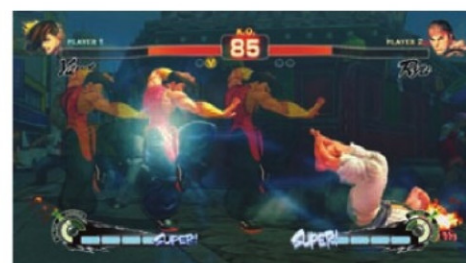
PS3 A lot can change in two and a half years. Since *Street Fighter IV* first hit consoles and brought Bison fanatics, button-mashing Blankas and Ken scrubs alike back out of the woodwork, all manner of other contenders have stepped up to offer their competitive wares to the rejuvenated fighting scene. Arc's impressive *BlazBlue* series keeps getting better, *Tekken* and *Marvel Vs Capcom* have both returned in style and even gutsy upstarts like *Arcana Heart* and *Skullgirls* have decided they want a piece of the action, too. It's almost enough

to make a game about men that can throw fire from their hands seem tiresome.

Almost, but not quite. But should you care about *Arcade Edition*? That depends. Capcom's update comes in two flavours – a full retail release and a downloadable update for *Super Street Fighter IV*. The latter offers best value to those that already have the game (or that can find a copy on the cheap), the disc version presumably replacing copies of vanilla *Super* on shelves for the perusing pleasure of those hapless few that still haven't re-embraced the way of the fist with Capcom's glorious return to form.

The leap from *SFIV* to *Super* was huge and by comparison, changes made for *Arcade Edition* are pretty minor. Four new characters join the roster – *SFIII* twins Yun and Yang are easily the more interesting pair, with Evil Ryu and Oni just adding to the already overly large pool of shoto variants. In addition, the rest of the roster has undergone an under-the-hood makeover, tweaks made to move properties, hit boxes and damage in the interest of keeping things fair, but it's likely only serious players will notice much of a difference. It's all based on the coin-op version, too – while they were at it, it might have been nice for Capcom to have responded to feedback from the arcade version and made some further changes. Ah well.

A few neat additions to the online side of things certainly help but that question still rings loud and clear – *should you care?* And the simple answer is yes. If you still haven't upgraded from *SFIV* to *Super* (or never got involved in the first place), there's now more incentive than ever to do so. And for those with *Super Street Fighter IV*, the download version offers a little extra longevity at a



Yun seems to be the new darling of the pro circuit – amazing damage potential has made him the new main of many a top player.

reasonable enough price. A major update this may not be, but it should be enough to draw players back into an already great game for its definitive version.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

To upgrade or not to upgrade? In the absence of proper integration for the new characters in terms of Arcade mode rival fights and Challenge mode combo training, only the hardcore will get the most out of *Arcade Edition*.

88%





DETAILS

Publisher
THQ
Developer
Griptonite Games
Price
£39.99
Players
1
Genre
Action-adventure
Age Rating
7
Website
www.kungfupanda2
videogame.com
Twitter
@THQ_Inc
Facebook
facebook.com/
kungfupanda?sk=wall



LOOK HE'S FAT HA HA HA.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Kung Fu Panda 2

Everybody was... (collect your things, you're fired – ed)



We've struggled for some time to think of an approach to this review. Going down the banal, obvious route of saying something about kids games being 'aimed at kids' or some other patronising twaddle is the method of the most boring writers. Pointing out that games based on



movies often aren't particularly good is just as moot a point.

We could talk about how Jack Black annoys us simply by being Jack Black in everything he's ever been in. Except in *Brütal Legend*, where he was *both* Jack Black *and* didn't annoy us. But even that's too obvious.

Should we slate the game's mechanics? Everybody expects it to be pap, so what could we possibly add on top of what you've already assumed? The jumping is a bit weird? No, that's not going to cut it either.

Maybe we could go down the bargaining route, offering our hope that in the future titles like this will have some time and care invested in them? But that brings up the whole argument of whether we actually mean it or

not, which is a can of worms that frankly we can do without right now.

But then, all that's really irrelevant, because this is a game about a talking anthropomorphic panda who can do kung fu and make wisecracks. So yeah, that's the level we're dealing with here.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Legitimate criticism falls by the wayside here, so let's just list some other things we want to see doing kung fu: yellow Labradors; sparrows; chocolate Labradors; a notebook with arms, legs and a face; Brian Blessed.

20%



DETAILS

Publisher
Zen United
Developer
Arc Systems Works
Price
£34.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Beat-'em-up
Age Rating
12
Website
www.examu.co.jp/
arcanaheart3/index.
html
Twitter
@BlazBlue_Europe
Facebook
http://on.fb.me/
ltwNRI

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Arcana Heart 3

I Heart You



There's not much room for fanning about on a half-page review, so let's get right to the heart (ha!) of the matter. *Arcana Heart 3* is *BlazBlue* with the insanity cranked up to max. It's *Street Fighter* with an even deeper combo system and madness. It's *Mortal Kombat* with... actually no. It's nothing like *Mortal Kombat* at all.

Taking its cue from the chain-combo of *Guilty Gear*, *Arcana Heart 3* works not

only because the fighters themselves have been picked straight off the conveyor belt of Arc System Works' madcap design factory but their accompanying Arcanas have been, too. Arcanas are what provide a sub-set of special moves that also change your character slightly. Ice lets you slide along the ground. Luck randomly improves your stats. Mirror

enables you to copy your opponent's moves. Sound lets you set sonic bombs. The list goes on, as does the overall choice of who to team up with which Arcana.



Arcanas will give your fighters some crazy skills and powers.



Arcana Heart 3 is one for hardcore beat-'em-up fans.

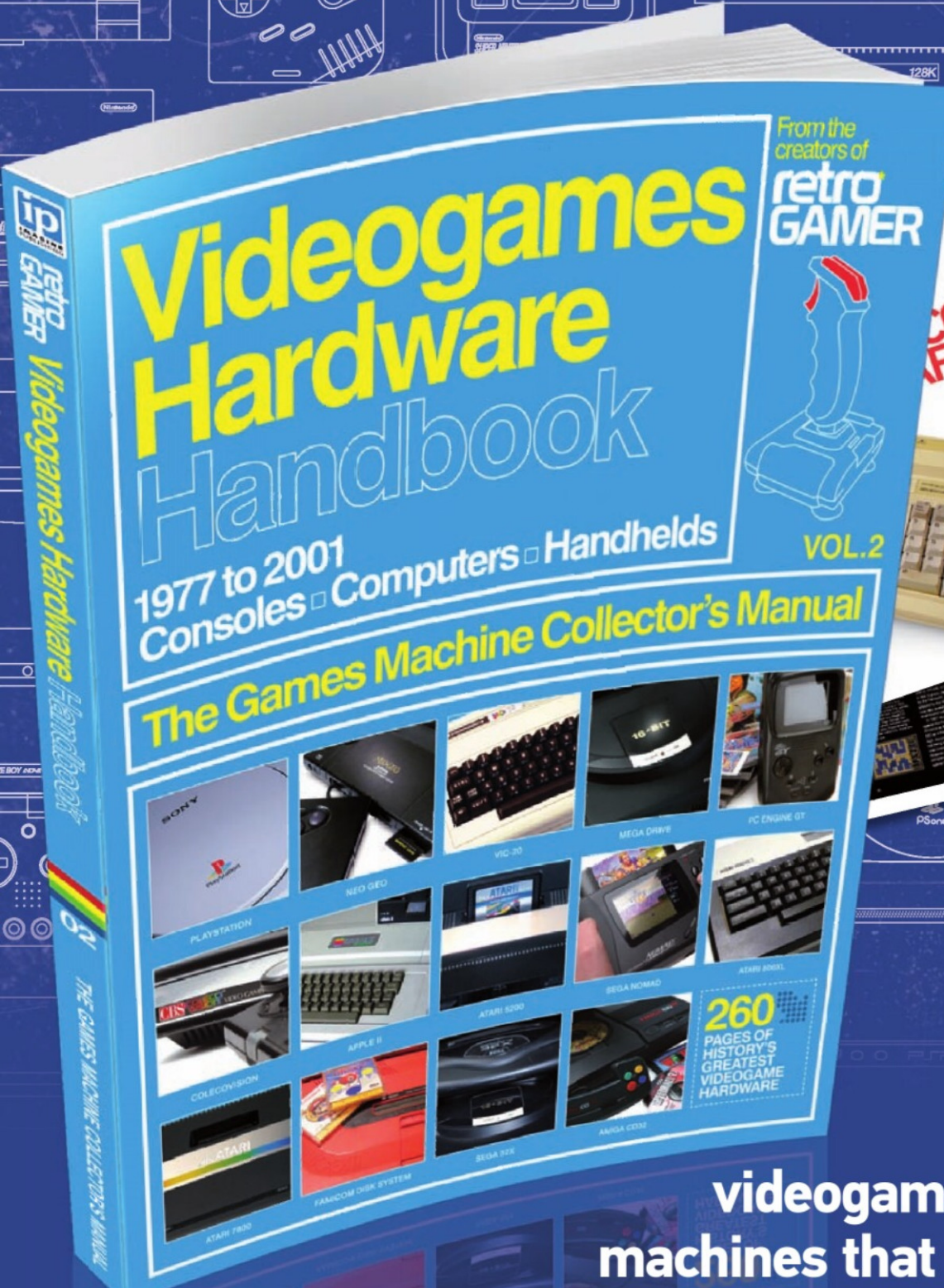
What *Arcana Heart 3* won't do is convert those who find fighting games too difficult or too demanding. The niche nature of *Arcana Heart 3* will scare them away. Instead, those who have dipped their toes into the fighting game genre now have another option on the brawling menu dictated by a wealth of in-game choice and driven by mental design. And it's the only game where you can play as a nun backed up by a sound bomb-laying chicken.

Ryan King

VERDICT

It's a niche choice in a niche genre but the kiddy exterior masks a surprisingly complex game that rewards investment. If fighting game fans are after something different, this ticks that box many, many times.

79%



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inFamous 2

UGC is just so current right now

DETAILS

Publisher
Sony
Developer
Sucker Punch
Release date
Out Now
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
Action-adventure

WITH GAME TRADE-INS and pre-owned sales being of such great concern to publishers, a need to bring in features that give them more life beyond a finite single-player campaign is becoming common. For *inFamous 2* that's meant forgoing the typical answer of a competitive multiplayer or even co-op mode and offering user-generated content. The end result is ingenious, although not always successful.

We've talked a little about the creation tools in our main review, so we won't spend time on those again, suffice to say they will require some commitment to master. Early adopters of *inFamous 2* were already putting out some interesting content, which would suggest some take to it more easily than others.

But what we wanted to see was *what* people were making, not *how* they were making it and as with any such system the results were mixed, but interesting. Some creators are looking to create their own side plots with recurring characters and a real mixture of mission objective types. Others are creating

missions intended solely to boost your XP or Karma and help progression through the game. When used to these ends the final quality is almost of secondary importance. With only text that scrolls sometimes a little too quickly to explain themselves, some creators struggle to make their intentions clear sometimes.

The only drawback to *inFamous 2*'s UGC is how you filter it. Many missions were built with a specific ability in mind and if you try it too early in the game you'll be forced to abort. Of course some abilities are dependent on your Karma choices meaning that you may never be able to complete certain user challenges. Filtering missions according to your progression through the game isn't an option, but you can filter against Karma-based missions which does help.

It would also be useful if the community rating for each mission was given as you hovered over it on the map rather than when standing next to it in the world. We're sure, like many of you, we'd rather not travel across the

city for a new mission only to find it's been rated as two stars. This would make finding the best content much easier for everyone.

What is most important is that creators are already being very imaginative in what they create, spurred on by Sucker Punch itself, which already has UGC missions available, too. Even if you only choose to have the Featured missions of the moment on your map you'll still have plenty to keep you busy alongside the main campaign and plenty of opportunities to earn valuable XP and Karma for the tougher later stages of the game. Bringing UGC to *inFamous 2* was inspired, even if the execution hasn't been.

Jon Gordon

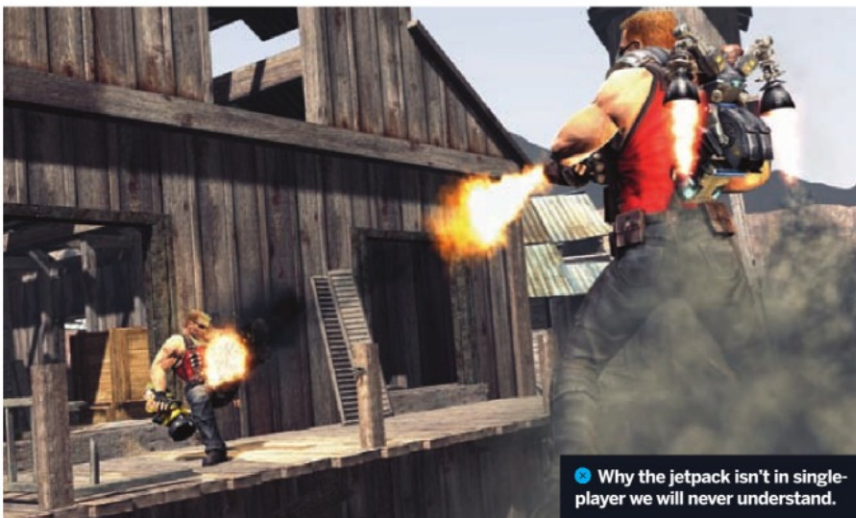
VERDICT

With solid tools and a playground of a world as a canvas, creators are already making useful content for levelling up and earning Karma. However, finding the really good stuff takes patience. Some updated filtering would be welcome. ★★☆☆





● Good luck aiming that well when you're actually playing. Twitchy is an understatement.



● Why the jetpack isn't in single-player we will never understand.

Duke Nukem Forever

Press square to spank

Publisher 2K Games **Developer** Gearbox/3D Realms **Release date** Out now **Price** £49.99 **Players** 1-8 **Genre** FPS

WHILE DUKE NUKEM *Forever's* campaign mode resides in the same lofty company as the likes of *Quantum Theory* and *Rogue Warrior* for sheer quality, the multiplayer aspect is actually not that bad. Admittedly it's also entirely without point and isn't nearly good enough for us to recommend you buy the game for it, but at least it isn't completely without merit like the rest of the game is.

The standard deathmatch, team deathmatch, capture the flag and king of the hill modes are on offer – though each with their own wacky Duke-related names or take on the usual fare. Capture The Babe, for example, replaces the flag with a creepy (apparently 'sexy') schoolgirl. Witty, no doubt. All modes are limited to eight players tops, so there's no scope for

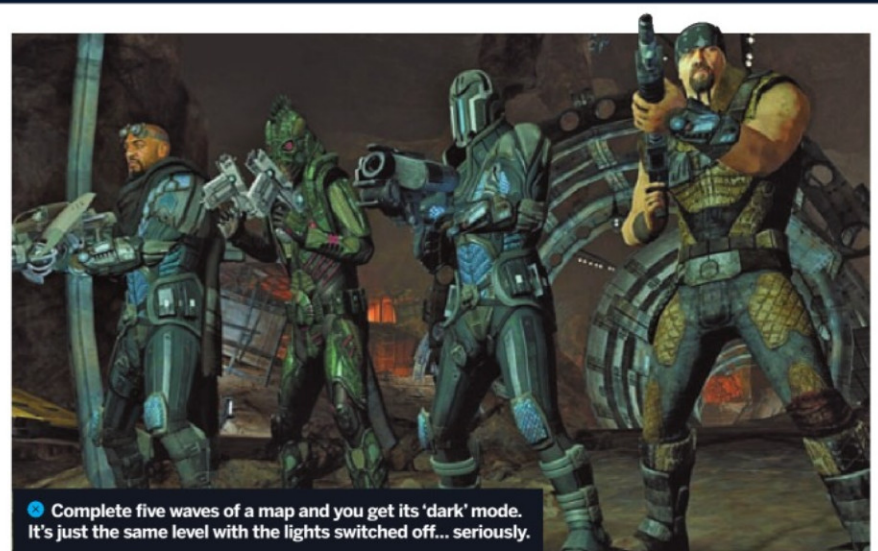
any really epic battles – though at the same time this means you're less likely to be constantly killed by innumerable unseen enemies. Small mercies. It's a distraction that can easily eat up an hour or two of your time, but it's nowhere near as rewarding as *Bad Company 2*, *Black Ops*, *Homefront* or any other 'proper' online shooter.

Oh, and the Capture The Babe mode is just as creepy and offensive as we expected it to be.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Not entirely without merit, *Duke Nukem Forever's* multiplayer portion still doesn't bring anything really worthwhile to the table. It is a great deal better than the single-player portion, though. ★★☆☆☆



● Complete five waves of a map and you get its 'dark' mode. It's just the same level with the lights switched off... seriously.

Red Faction: Armageddon

Destructive, but not in the right way

Publisher THQ **Developer** Volition Inc **Release date** Out now **Price** £49.99 **Players** 1-4 **Genre** Action-adventure

THANKS TO GEOMOD 2.0 *Red Faction: Guerrilla's* multiplayer was a pleasantly surprising affair. The destruction mechanics allowed Volition to toy with the traditional limitations of multiplayer modes like capture the flag and team deathmatch – tasking players with destroying or repairing buildings, giving them the ability to smash through walls, and offering offline pass-the-pad modes like *Wrecking Crew*.

Red Faction: Armageddon's greatest flaw isn't that it fails to offer any kind of competitive mode whatsoever. It's that it doesn't bother to incorporate GeoMod 2.5 into the four-player co-op gameplay in any worthwhile manner. It's just there – a passive feature that doesn't impact on the flow of matches in any truly consequential manner.

Instead you're just left fighting off waves of incoming alien enemies. Get to the sixth wave and the game turns from a terse battle into all-out chaos,

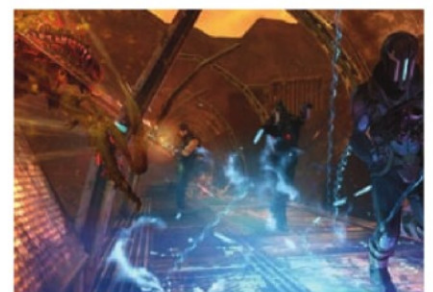
with tactics going out the window as players run amok shooting whatever green monstrosity is unfortunate enough to cross their path. It can be fun but grows tiring fast – there's simply not enough variety in the map design or flimsy objectives.

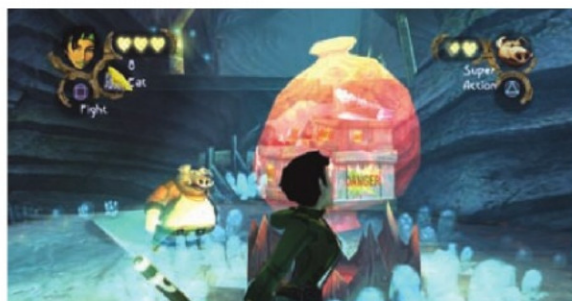
It's a great shame. Volition has refused to make something interesting with the tools it has at its disposal, and decided instead to make the most disappointing kind of multiplayer – one that exists more for marketing than it does for enhancing the package.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

Volition should have done more to leverage its GeoMod technology in *Armageddon's* multiplayer. Instead it's just opted to throw in the multiplayer du jour of four-player co-op and presented it as little more than an afterthought. ★★☆☆☆





DETAILS

Publisher Ubisoft
Developer Ubisoft
Release Date Out now
Price £7.99
Players 1
Genre Action-adventure
Website <http://bit.ly/fMBgrr>
Twitter @Ubisoft
Facebook <http://on.fb.me/mkrCKC>

Beyond Good & Evil HD

Beyond good is just about right

IF YOU'VE BEEN a reader of *Play* for any amount of time then we probably don't need to repeat what a great game *Beyond Good & Evil* was on PS2 and how good it remains after all these years. It was unique, inspired and gripping, but the one question we were asking ourselves when playing this high-definition remake was has that magic carried over and survived in PSN.

For the most part it definitely has, although there are some signs of the ageing game lagging behind small, modern improvements to this kind of 3D action game. Camera

control, for instance, lacks a certain sensitivity and you cannot invert the X and Y axis camera controls individually – you invert both or not at all. This is really such a small point, but it's the kind of thing that can pull you out of the experience for a moment and perhaps should have been addressed during development.

However, Ubisoft seems to have gone to great lengths to change as little as possible, leaving *Beyond Good & Evil HD* standing proudly, warts and all, as close to the original as possible. All we get are some crisper lines for our high-definition TV to display.

It's been treated in much the same way as a classic painting gets restored. The colours are brought out, the lines given better definition, but no one dare change anything more for fear of stealing away the X factor that made it a masterpiece. The end result is the same great game, but one that isn't as crisp in its controls as it is in its looks.

Jon Gordon

VERDICT

It could have done with some more tweaking, but it's still as good today as it was when it was released.

86%

DETAILS

Publisher Electronic Arts
Developer Vanguard Entertainment
Release Date Out now
Price TBC
Players 1-2
Genre Twin-stick shooter
Website www.vanguard-entertainment.com
Twitter @vanguard_eg
Facebook <http://on.fb.me/mPwV6x>

Gatling Gears

Repetition that will really grind your gears

GATLING GEARS IS undeniably a satisfying game. Taking place in a world that's part steampunk, part fairytale, you waddle across bucolic fields and snowy mountains in a bipedal mech equipped with a Gatling gun, missiles and grenades, blasting through screens full of the evil Empire's foot soldiers, tanks, aircraft and hulking machinery.

It's typical twin-stick shooter fare but made to feel plump and gratifying, your Gatling gun – controlled with the right stick – being of a short range but also fast and powerful. Mixing things up with rockets adds a satisfying, meaty punch to the combat, while grenades can be targeted and then lobbed for a powerful explosive attack. There's a one-use screen clearing, ass-saving special attack, too, which puts a big full stop to any encounter.

It's great fun... at first. *Gatling Gears'* problem is that it shows its hand early and then doesn't mix things up. New enemy varieties bring nothing extra to the experience other than more hit points, and upgrades to your arsenal feel inconsequential.

It's the same thing across 30 levels – avoid incoming rockets, blast the crap

out of whatever they are emanating from. *Gatling Gear's* boss battles, with their devious attack patterns and multi-level stages, offer something a little bit different, but don't alleviate the grinding repetition that sets in far too early and never dissipates.

Gatling Gears' saving grace is in the fact that although it's stuck repeating the same trick, it's a good trick. However, that sense of satisfaction isn't enough to make it a must-play PlayStation Network title.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

If *Gatling Gears* had a few more ideas scattered throughout its generous play time then it'd be worth more than a couple afternoons of play. But it doesn't – it repeats the same gameplay to such an extent it eventually drives the concept into the ground.

62%



● *Gatling Gears* is better when playing co-op. Shock horror!

DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer
Entertainment
Developer
Seed Studios
Release Date
Out now
Price
£11.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Real-time
strategy
Website
www.seed-
studios.com
Twitter
@SeedStudios
Facebook
facebook.com/
undersiegeggame

Under Siege

Obligatory Steven Seagal reference is go

A REAL-TIME STRATEGY game that can be played with PlayStation Move? What are the odds?! Quite good, it seems. *Under Siege* does not star an ex-Navy SEAL who nobody beats in the kitchen, unfortunately, but what it does do is offer a fair bit of fun.

To describe it as an RTS-lite would be doing the game some disservice, as while it does eschew many traditions of the genre – massive armies and resource management, for example – that isn't to say it's in any way light on challenge.



In fact, it's really a bit too heavy on challenge, to the point that it could be considered *too* difficult. We're talking *Savage Moon* levels of frustrating 'oh I may as well quit already I'm never going to rescue this' hardtitude.

It's not a game-breaker by any means, and with the game being built from the ground up for console the experience is made more enjoyable. Mainly because you can actually control the bloody thing, though it can also be a little bit of a chore using the pad, especially when things get a bit hectic on screen. It's not always bad, though.

We noticed a fair bit of dodgy pathfinding and – sometimes – unresponsive controls. These points combined with the prohibitive level of difficulty make it hard to recommend *Under Siege* to anyone other than those willing to take on board its faults. If you really want an RTS game you can play with Move, you should probably opt for *R.U.S.E.* Or, you know, you could just buy this.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Fun and interesting, but hampered by obscene difficulty and some other niggles.

71%



DETAILS

Publisher
Laughing Jackal
Developer
Laughing Jackal
Release Date
August
Price
£6.99
Players
1-7
Genre
Puzzle
Website
http://bit.ly/UjRT6
Twitter
@laughing_jackal
Facebook
http://on.fb.me/
iAtsIM

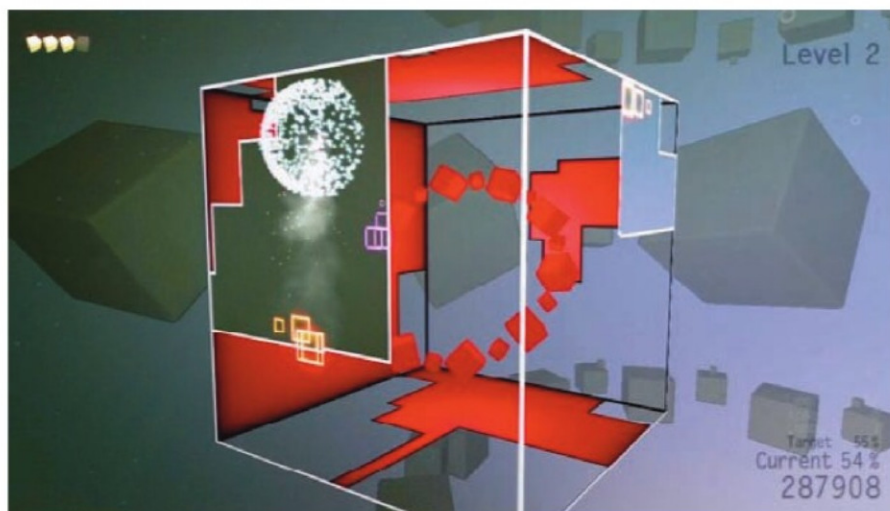
Cubixx HD

IN THE MOULD of classic cut-out puzzle games – with more emphasis on skill than puzzling, mind you – *Cubixx HD* asks players to slice up sections of a cube. Once a certain amount has been removed by the player, the level ends. That's about it. It's an old style of game, made prettier and turned into a cube with a few different, reasonably interesting enemy types thrown in for good measure.

Where *Cubixx HD* comes into its own is through multiplayer – taking a fairly good fun experience and turning it into quite the laugh-riot. Not everyone is going to be able to play it with six others, though.

Ian Dransfield

76%



DETAILS

Publisher
Targem Games
Developer
Targem Games
Release Date
Out now
Price
£7.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Action
Website
http://eng.
targem.ru/
Twitter
@PlayMag_UK
Facebook
http://on.fb.me/
kq5ykn

Armageddon Riders

IT COULD INDEED be argued that *Armageddon Riders* owes quite a debt to the *Carmageddon* games, in that it's driving, destruction and murder all wrapped up in one neat package. Cruising around a city overrun with zombies is good fun, though the innate shallowness of the experience is only slightly offset with the addition of upgradeable vehicles. Handling is a bit loose, but nothing that can't be learned with a bit of practice.

It's not brilliant and it does get old quite quickly, but those looking for something *Carmageddon*-shaped to fill a hole in their lives could do a lot worse.

Ian Dransfield

65%

UNDER THE INFLUENCE... The games that changed it all



Half-Life

- Release date November 2001 • Publisher Sierra Online
- Developer Gearbox • Games it influenced Every FPS from 1998 to Half-Life 2

HALF-LIFE CAME OUT in 1998 on PC, and took three years to make its way over to PS2. In that time its influence had already been felt on the wider world of FPS games and, basically, the 'all' we talk about in the header up there at the top of the page had already been changed. But we were still more than happy to receive Valve's masterpiece (ported by Randy Pitchford and his studio Gearbox) into the PlayStation fold.

The PS2 received a tarted-up version of one of the best games ever made

The three-year wait wasn't for naught, however, as the PS2 received a tarted-up version of one of the best games ever made. Textures were sharper, weapon models improved and characters especially looked better than the first time around. We also saw additional modes, including Decay – a two-player co-operative spin-off that emphasised puzzles over combat. Reminds us of another Valve game...

But like we said, *Half-Life* on PS2 entered at a time when the game had already changed everything. Its arrival on PC brought so many features that we take for granted now it's hard to remember them all. You know how fallen enemies drop their weapons? Before *Half-Life* that didn't

happen in FPS games. You know how pretty much all of *Call Of Duty* is a scripted sequence? Before *Half-Life* you weren't seeing those outside of cut-scenes in FPSs. Before *Half-Life* first-person shooters were divided into levels – after *Half-Life* a lot of them became one long, constant, flowing journey. The whole game being seen through the protagonist's eyes. The ridiculously good (for the time) AI of the human enemies. The crowbar.

There's more, too, it's just we're now so used to these features being in modern games we take them for granted and forget where they actually came from, or what it was that popularised them as features. The common element being *Half-Life*.

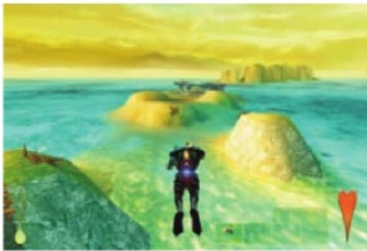
So yes, by the time it was released on PS2 we'd already had the likes of *Red Faction* and other titles that 'derived from' Valve's masterpiece. But it doesn't change the fact that we ended up getting one of the most complete versions of one of the most influential and best games ever made. It makes us all warm and cosy just thinking about it.

WHAT WE SAID: Issue 84 • 89%

"*Half-Life* is exceptionally well designed, plays on a greater scale and requires more thought than Volition's pretty baby [*Red Faction*] and so comes highly recommended."



YOU NEVER PLAYED THIS



Giants: Citizen Kabuto deserved more love than it received. Hang your heads in shame.

Giants: Citizen Kabuto

- Release date December 2001
- Publisher Interplay Entertainment • Developer Digital Mayhem

PLANET MOON STUDIOS developed *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* (though Digital Mayhem handled the PS2 port). It also developed *Armed & Dangerous*, though we didn't get that on PS2. Then it made *Infected* for PSP. All three were interesting games. All three failed to sell very well at all. Now Planet Moon Studios makes Disney games and *Brain Quest* for DS. This is why we know you never played *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*.

If you had, we'd probably be seeing more innovative and funny games coming out of the studio. We would see more games from the company that mess with the very basics of gaming, mixing third-person shooters with real-time strategy games. We'd see more people saying, "Ohhh, so *that's* where *Brütal Legend* got the idea from!" We'd see more jetpacks,

because jetpacks are brilliant. And we'd see more games that are actually, genuinely funny.

But nobody bought the damn thing. In fact, trawling through the archives we haven't even been able to find a review of *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* in *Play*. Turns out we're just as guilty as the rest of you. But we're going to make up for that now with an impromptu review.

'*Giants: Citizen Kabuto* is really fun and really interesting. It isn't amazing, but it definitely has potential and is an experience all gamers should take part in. Buy it and enjoy it. 82%.'

That's better. We've managed to clean some of the stench of let-down off us now. Find *Citizen Kabuto* in many second-hand shops for a matter of just a few quid.

FATHER AND SON RELATIONSHIPS ACCORDING TO PLAYSTATION

DADS TEND TO be alright with their sons – being, y'know, *supportive* and stuff. And sons tend to reciprocate in some way. Not Heihachi and Kazuya Mishima, though. No, they throw each other off cliffs and into volcanoes. It's enough to make Jeremy Kyle weep. Except we all know he can't cry.



WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT...

South Park

SOUTH PARK IS one of the best things that's ever happened to TV. This is a factual statement. *South Park* the game is one of the worst things that's ever happened to PlayStation. This is a factual statement.

1999 was a different time, where *some of us* still bought into the whole idea of 'buying things because they're based on licences we like'. *Some of us* made the mistake of not listening to *Play* before buying the game (*Play* 56, 24%). Awful, turgid, unfunny, broken nonsense of the highest order. Good thing the TV series keeps on getting better.



RETRO GAMES WE SAID WE WANT TO PLAY AGAIN BUT PROBABLY WON'T



Soviet Strike

'STOP THE WAR, before it starts' said the man with the fun American accent. Back in the mid-Nineties we were all over that order. These days we said we'd be all over it, but then we got bored of the idea and didn't bother.



Nuclear Strike

IF WE'VE ALREADY said we're not going to play *Soviet Strike*, why would we bother playing *Nuclear Strike*? It's the same thing, almost, just released a bit later. It was just a stupid suggestion our stupid brains stupidly made without thinking it through. No offence, *Strike* series.



Bushido Blade

CAREFUL, CONSIDERED, TACTICAL, yet sudden. *Bushido Blade*'s realistic weapon combat was truly unique on PSone and it's a game well worth revisiting as an example of how daring devs can be. But... nah. We can't be bothered. It's sunny outside.



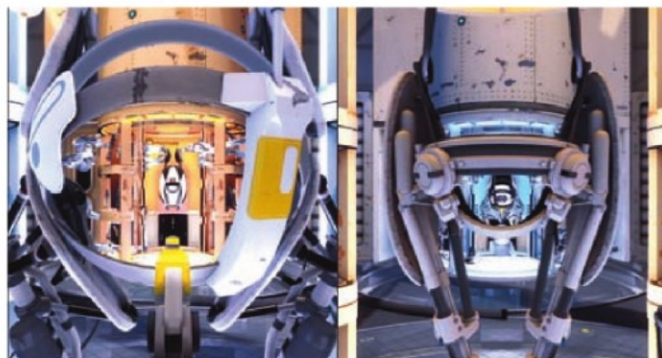
Duke Nukem: Land Of The Babes

IN PREPARATION FOR *Duke Nukem Forever* we wanted to play one of the lesser *Duke* titles on PSone. But then we had a brainwave: we could *not* play it instead. The brainwave served us well, as *Land Of The Babes* was ass of the highest order.

**PLAY TEST
ANSWERS
THE BIG
QUESTIONS**

WHAT CO-OP GAMES CAN YOU VIABLY PLAY ALONE?

Do you have a big pile of co-op games but no online connection to play them with your friends? Or, like us, do you not have any friends and spend your Friday nights quietly weeping while watching reruns of *Quantum Leap*? Well, have no fear! Play is here to do the hard work so you don't have to. We've played six co-op games all on our own, and all in the name of SCIENCE and RESEARCH (also because we had nothing better to do). We can now reveal the objective and empirical truth about the following six co-op games. Can you play them while all on your lonesome? Read on to find out.



PORTAL 2

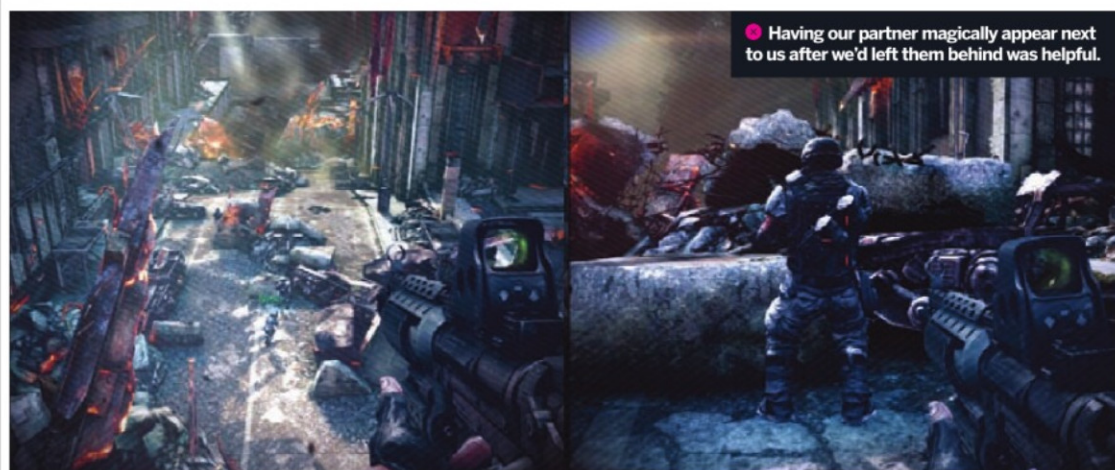
WE LOVE SCIENCE here at Play. Perhaps not as much as GLaDOS, but still quite a bit. That's why we undertook 14 complete playthroughs of *Portal 2*'s co-op mode totally alone and wearing only a lab coat. Okay, that's a lie. It was only 13 playthroughs.

So, how did it work out? Not too bad actually. We could solve a few of the early puzzles with little trouble. Even when things got a bit tricky and required a quick swapping of pads we found our keenly honed reflexes were enough for the task.

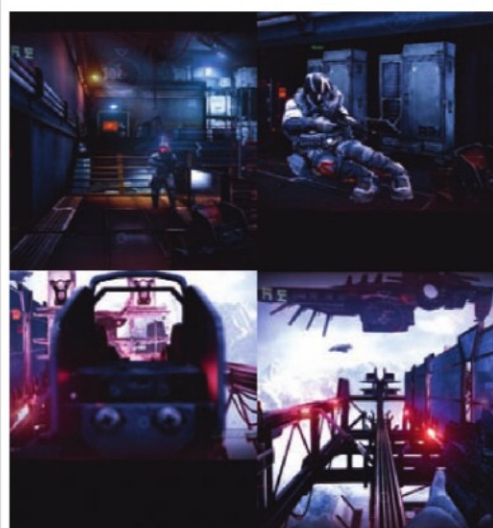
The only problem was... it got a bit boring. A bit... lonely. Having to continuously swap pads to ensure both robots remained neck and neck was irritating, but we could deal with it. What we couldn't deal with was the crushing despair we felt when laughing at a silly mistake we made, only to turn and share the laughter and find that no one was there. We were laughing to ourselves. In a room. Big, dark, empty and cold. ★★☆☆



Chris tries to get to grips with co-op gaming.



Having our partner magically appear next to us after we'd left them behind was helpful.



KILLZONE 3

LESS CEREBRAL THAN *Portal 2*, we thought *Killzone 3* would be the easier game on which to play co-op alone and we were right, because we're amazing like that.

What made it so easy was that we could just control one character and eventually the one we left behind would magically pop up alongside us whenever we got too far ahead. At one point our partner appeared next to us floating in the air with his legs outstretched, but we soldiered on.

An unexpected find was the game-altering properties a second character could offer. We often used him to look down on battlefields from above, and then watched that screen while controlling the other player character, thus turning *Killzone 3* into a top-down shooter. Kind of. We had to come up with some way of enjoying ourselves. We were feeling more isolated and alone by the second. ★★☆☆



You won't need any friends to play *Mortal Kombat* in co-op.

MORTAL KOMBAT

MORTAL KOMBAT ISN'T co-op you say? What? You didn't say that? We must be hearing voices again...

Well, whether you did or not, it kind of is co-op because you can do tag team battles and both play on the same side. And by both, we mean just one of us holding two pads like an imbecile.

We chose to play as Kratos and Kabal because their names are kind of similar and we imagine in real life they would probably get on. They could talk about eviscerating people with large, sharp objects and *The Only Way Is Essex* (they both love that show).

It was actually incredibly easy. Upon pressing **L1** to tag out characters we had plenty of time to swap pads and get in control of the second combatant. We laughed our way through every match, sometimes swapping 100-plus times in the course of one fight just because we could. Things were looking up. ★★★★★



NBA Jam made us so angry we could've killed someone... fortunately we were alone.

NBA JAM

OUR SUCCESS ON *Mortal Kombat* had put us in high spirits and the fact we have no friends wasn't hurting quite so much any more. However, our optimism was soon crushed when we put on *NBA Jam* and selected to play as the Boston Celtics against the LA Lakers.

NBA Jam is not an easy game to play alone. Matches are played with such speed and on such a small court that it's virtually impossible to keep up. The ferocity with which we were attempting to change pads to keep up with the opposing team's passes and dribbles was of such an intensity that at

one point we nearly chucked one of them out of an open window.

Our poor performance possibly also had something to do with the fact that the person playing didn't really know much about *NBA Jam*. Or basketball. In fact, it was me. Chris. Yeah, that's right; I'm talking in the first-person perspective now. I'm breaking all the rules! I just want to make some friends... meet someone... someone to play *NBA Jam* with me so I don't get quite so horribly beaten next time. Is anybody out there? ★★★★★



Not nearly as fun in one-player co-op.

LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

ALTHOUGH LITTLEBIGPLANET 2 is able to support up to four players, we decided to attempt it with just two. We had to keep our testing practices scientifically consistent after all (it had absolutely nothing to do with the fact that we couldn't be bothered finding another two pads).

We began playing a game on *LittleBigPlanet 2* with two Sackboys and attempted to bounce them from one side of each level to the other. In truth, it was a rather laborious task, with us having to continually swap pads every couple of seconds to keep the little mites side by side.

However, upon noticing we had infinite respawn doors we realised we could just use one pad and let the other Sackboy constantly respawn as we ran ahead.

Genius! All we had to do was put up with the camera annoyingly zooming in and out every time we got too far away from the unmanned second player. But by this point such irritations were the least of our problems. We had started to go delirious from the solitude and found ourselves chatting to a potted plant in the corner about the pros and cons of shopping at Waitrose. ★★★★★



The PS Eye witnessed us at rock bottom.

YOOSTAR 2

AT THIS POINT I had gone off the rails. Desperate for something to make me feel better after my horrible defeat on *NBA Jam* I opted for what was surely the easiest game in the world! *Yoostar 2*. Certain scenes can be played with two actors – although here I would be playing both parts. I chose scenes from *The Wizard Of Oz*, *Norbit* and *The Karate Kid*.

As I jumped from the left to the right of the screen spouting lines from films I've only seen once or twice, rambling like an idiot to myself in a room all alone, I was confronted with the complete and utter inanity and hopelessness of my task. My world crumbled around me, and the PlayStation Eye looked on as I wept in front of Daniel LaRusso. The Play Test had finally done it. It had broken me. ★★★★★

CONCLUSION: Using a strict scientific process, we have concluded that playing co-op games on your own is both a pointless and fruitless endeavour, and will only result in a complete mental breakdown. We suggest that instead of doing so you make some friends. Go volunteer at a food shelter or join a book club. It's a good way to start.



The Adjustment Bureau

PRICE: £16.99 **SOUND:** TBC **DIRECTOR:** George Nolfi **STARRING:** Matt Damon, Emily Blunt, Anthony Mackie

THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU sees David Norris (Damon), a young congressman, thwarted in his attempts to spark a relationship with dancer Elise (Blunt) by the shadowy agents of the title. Working behind the scenes of everyday life and manipulating the fate of everyone in it, *The Adjustment Bureau* is dead set on keeping the couple apart,

leading to a metaphysical adventure that takes the two lovers beyond the veil of reality. It's a lighter adaptation of a Philip K Dick story than we're used to, but it's no bad film because of it – it's amusing, inventive and touching. If *The Adjustment Bureau* has it in their plan for you, it's well worth a watch.

RATING: ★★★★★



Rango

PRICE: £16.99 **SOUND:** TBC **DIRECTOR:** Gore Verbinski **STARRING:** Johnny Depp, Isla Fisher, Timothy Olyphant

RANGO MAY LOOK like it's for kids, but feels more adult than most animated features released in recent years. It's packed with references – the plot is pinched from *Chinatown*; Johnny Depp's performance recalls *Dead Man*'s William Blake; and there are even nods to the likes of *Apocalypse Now*. It'll all fly over the heads of the kids, but they'll love it anyway, even without 3D. *Rango*'s

arguably better without it, the detailed, textured and believable CGI the most impressive we've yet seen in an animated film. The film may be a little overlong, sometimes too peculiar, and dawdles through one too many clichés, but thanks to a good sense of comedy and sumptuous visuals it overcomes these problems with flair.

RATING: ★★★★★



Detective Dee And The Mystery Of The Phantom Flame

PRICE: £16.99 **SOUND:** TBC **DIRECTOR:** Hark Tsui **STARRING:** Tony Leung Ka Fai, Chao Deng, Carina Lau

"Sounds wack," said Dan when we told him about *Detective Dee*. And when we said the full title? "Sounds super wack." Sigh. This is why Dan doesn't review anything. The good news is other sceptics will have their doubt blown away by the opening scene, a lush tracking shot of the inside of a huge golden statue. From here, a murder is committed as one

of the construction workers suddenly catches on fire – cue an intoxicating mixture of action, comedy and mystery mixed in with eccentric Eastern touches. It's not for everyone – Dan will never be convinced – but those willing to take a chance will find a gorgeous movie to look at that's a joy to watch.

RATING: ★★★★★



● The *District 9*-esque special effects are impressive, but the film's budget seems to demand that the camera shy away from them were possible.

Battle: Los Angeles

Fall asleep now in the fire



PRICE: £17.99 **SOUND:** DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 **DIRECTOR:** Jonathan Liebesman **STARRING:** Aaron Eckhart, Michelle Rodriguez, Bridget Moynahan

Battle: *Los Angeles* is the invasion movie for the *Call Of Duty* generation – a bombastic, set piece-driven story that's more concerned

with military gung-ho antics than it is with plot or character. It even follows the same structure of a videogame – the larger set pieces are intercut with lengthy cut-scenes and dull corridor shooting sections. There's a tower defence section. There's an on-rails turret section. There's even a boss battle at the end.

Like many videogames it's all entertaining, but overall *Battle: Los Angeles* lacks substance. It's lazy filmmaking by the numbers, more concerned with making its explosions look dense and real than it is with crafting a narrative and cast of characters that you actually care about.

Aaron Eckhart does his best with an almost embarrassing script (we couldn't help but feel sorry for him when he had to tell a crying child, with a straight face, "You're the bravest damn marine I've ever met"). But he's the best of a bad lot. Every cliché from war film history features – the veteran sergeant on the point of retirement; the inexperienced lieutenant fresh out of officer school; the guy who's about to get married.

It's difficult to care about any of them, particularly when the scripting is this bad.

There's too much 'hoo-rah!' jingoistic sentimentality, the film incessantly ramming home the tragedy of every human loss. At the end of the film, Eckhart makes not one but *three* mawkishly patriotic speeches in a row.

But for all the handheld, shaky, *Saving Private Ryan*-styled action, director Liebesman isn't concerned with mimicking the human elements of superior sci-fi films like *District 9* or *Monsters*. He just wants to trash LA. He wants to fire lasers. He wants to make *Black Hawk Down* but with aliens instead of insurgents. The problem is that he does it with too much sincerity for a premise that is inarguably daft. We'd prefer the silliness of *Independence Day* over this any day.

Battle: Los Angeles does achieve a base level of entertainment, but ultimately it's burdened with too many clichés and a latter half that drags you on rather than pulls you in. Overall it's vacuous and tiresome and challenges the attention span more than the brain.

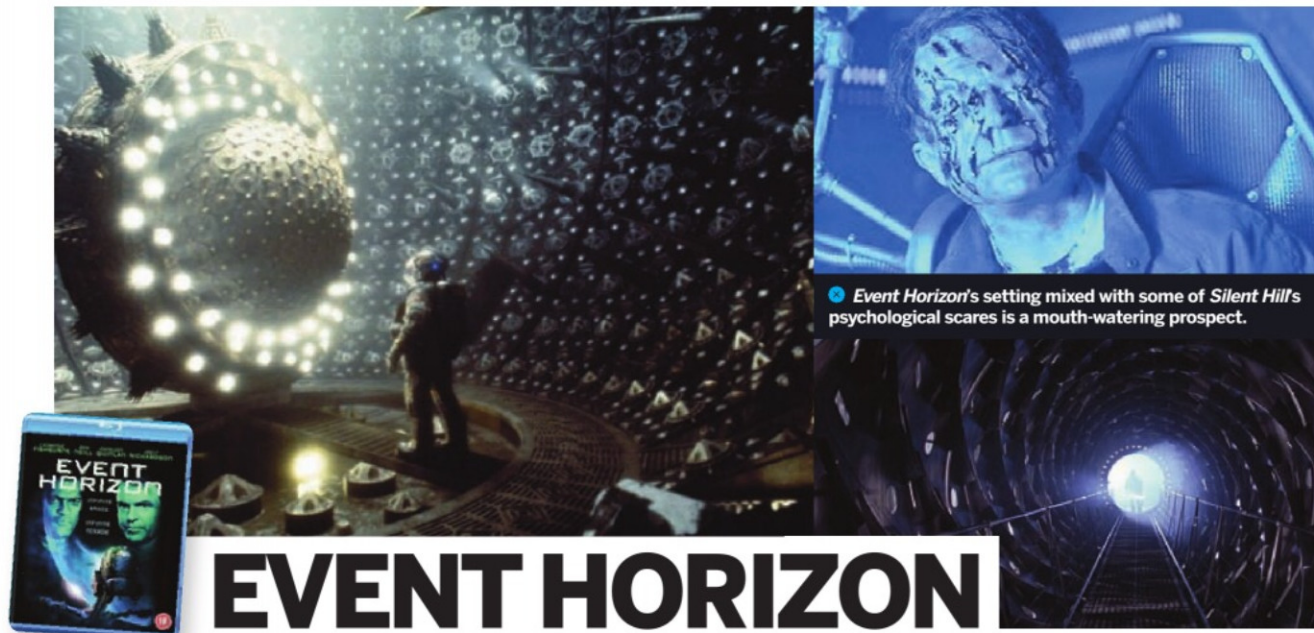
Chris McMahon

VERDICT

Big on bang, low on emotional impact, *Battle: Los Angeles* certainly looks nice when it's blowing things up, but as soon as the camera turns to the actors things take a turn for the worse. It feels like a B-movie that's accidentally been given a big budget.

RATING: ★★★★★

Movies that should be videogames



EVENT HORIZON

PAUL WS ANDERSON is responsible for the *Resident Evil* films – horrible for all the wrong reasons. But before he went about picking apart everything that made the *Resi* videogame series so good he made an original and genuinely unnerving horror named *Event Horizon*.

The story dealt with a rescue team sent to answer a distress signal received

from the starship of the title, one that disappeared during its maiden voyage to Proxima Centuri seven years prior. Turns out the *Event Horizon* has been to Hell and back and returned with an incredibly malevolent presence on board.

Dead Space owes a great deal to *Event Horizon*, with EA borrowing many elements of its aesthetic and narrative.

But we envision the *Event Horizon* game as something closer to *Silent Hill*. Psychological rather than visceral, fear being the focus rather than action.

Like *Silent Hill: Shattered Memories* there would be no combat, but a lot of exploration and crewmates who become increasingly untrustworthy. Just writing this has made us *really* want to play it.

Terrible videogame movie of the month

IT'D BE SILLY to suggest that *Doom* is a serious game, but this film is so stupid it makes the game it's based on look like a Dostoevsky novel. And that first-person sequence is why movies should never try to mimic games so directly.



Classic Blu-ray Fantastic Blu-rays you need to have in your collection

#6 Alien Anthology

Price: £49.99 **Sound:** DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 **Director:** Various **Starring:** Sigourney Weaver, John Hurt, Michael Beihn, Lance Henriksen

NOT SO MUCH one classic Blu-ray but three, with one rubbish film shoehorned in at the end (we're looking at you, *Alien Resurrection*). And yes, we still defend *Alien 3* as a classic.

But let's not kid ourselves; it's the first two films that are the real masterpieces. Many will argue that *Alien* is the finer film, laying claim to an originality that very few films offer these days and terrifying viewers with a new breed of monster and body horror.

Aliens may be standing on the shoulders of giants, but it's still a

brilliant piece of filmmaking. Ellen Ripley is more audacious than ever, facing a larger threat and surrounded by a brilliant cast of characters – the repugnant Burke; the tough-as-nails Vasquez; the dependable Hicks. *Aliens* built on what had come before but built on it brilliantly, replacing lo-fi thrills with all-out action but without sacrificing the original's pulsing terror.

Buy it, chuck out the *Resurrection* Blu-ray, and be satisfied that you own three brilliant pieces of cinema that have been imitated many times, but rarely matched.



Ridiculous moments in videogame movies



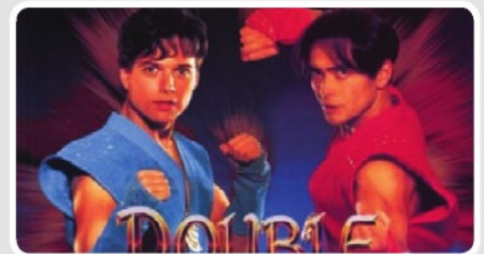
Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle Of Life

THE 2003 SEQUEL to the original *Tomb Raider* film is full of stupid moments but it's when she punches a shark in the face and then rides it to the surface that really takes the prize. Some things should be left in the games where they belong.



Mortal Kombat: Annihilation

PROBABLY ONE OF the most pathetic excuses for CGI ever seen in a film, the end of *Annihilation* sees Liu Kang and Shao Kahn perform their animalities, the former turning into a rubbish dragon and the latter into an even worse Hydra. It's the most depressingly poor CGI ever.



Double Dragon

YOU MIGHT REMEMBER Abobo as one of *Double Dragon*'s first bosses. In the film he's a gang leader who becomes a test subject in Kogo Shuko's labs, giving him huge muscles. Later he sees himself in the mirror and has a little cry. Watching a man in a weird latex costume crying into a mirror needs to be seen to be believed.



Lara Croft: Tomb Raider

YES, TOMB RAIDER is appearing twice on this list due to its insistence on being unrelentingly stupid. The first film reached its nadir right at the end when Lara entered an alternate existence and ran up the side of a giant pyramid in a race for a big triangle at the top. At that exact point the film plunged from poor to abysmal.

PLAY#20 Playlist

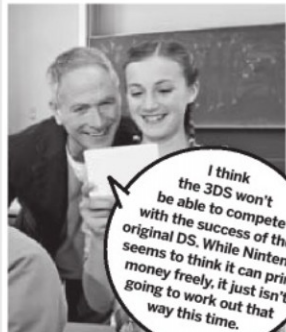
If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

GAME UNDER

Stock photography, fictitious stories, real lives...



Ah, I see you're playing one of those new 'Nintendos'... the 3DS, right?



I think the 3DS won't be able to compete with the success of the original DS. While Nintendo seems to think it can print money freely, it just isn't going to work out that way this time.



The market today is vastly different to the one Nintendo conquered years ago. The children and housewives who bought the DS have had their rare games-buying appetite sated.



People are buying less anyway, and those with handhelds are happy with what they've got. It's a situation I see having a negative effect on any potential 3DS sales, truth be told.



Also I'm not a teacher.

PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
More than enough additions to take the Assassin's Creed formula into modern classic territory.		
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.		
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The most over-the-top, inventive, consistently thrilling, overtly sexual, guiltily enjoyable Japanese action game we've played in years.		
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
With its diverse roster, stunning visuals and furiously paced gameplay, Continuum Shift is a must-have for beat-'em-up fans.		
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Treyarch's first genuinely brilliant entry to the series and a standard-bearer for fast-paced online shooters.		
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Catherine*	204	48%

game	issue	score
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Damnation	181	38%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
The point where the Dead Space series stepped up and became something to be genuinely excited about.		
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
As good as it was when we reviewed it on import, but with a better translation and it's also available here. One of PS3's best games.		
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
DiRT 3	206	85%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
It's just like playing Guitar Hero for the first time all over again, although DJ Hero is slightly more expensive.		
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.		
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%

game	issue	score
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
The best football game made marginally better. The crown held by PES seems like so long ago now.		
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA continues to improve and continues to dominate with this latest addition to the superior footy franchise.		
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.		
God Of War III	190	88%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Two fine expansions bundled together and without the need for GTA IV to play them. What more could you want.		
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero III is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So, grab a guitar and rock out!		
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
It will certainly split opinion, but we absolutely love it. A valuable addition to the wonderful world of gaming.		
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Homefront	203	69%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Iron Man	166	58%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Dungeon Siege III PS3	80%
L.A. Noire PS3	91%
DiRT 3 PS3	85%
MX Vs ATV: Alive PS3	42%
Brink PS3	67%
Thor: God Of Thunder PS3	38%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean PS3	76%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise PS3	89%
SBK 2011 PS3	70%
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable PSP	78%

Gladiator Begins PSP	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior PS3	45%
Yar's Revenge PSN	57%
Outland PSN	72%

game	issue	score
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
 Sony has proven that it has a PlayStation platform capable of supporting a truly world-class FPS. Best graphics ever.		
Killzone 3	202	80%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
L.A. Noire	206	91%
 Not perfect but Rockstar's new IP introduces pioneering facial-capture technology and interesting gameplay.		
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
 An amazing game and something to get involved with even if you can't create your own stuff.		
Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
 Why the hell are you reading this when you should be playing Mass Effect 2 instead? GO GO GO.		
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
 Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
 A questionable single-player mode is rendered null and void by the best multiplayer we've ever played.		
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%

game	issue	score
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
 The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love LBP you'll love this, too.		
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
Moto GP 10/11	204	64%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
MX Vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
naï'd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
 Hot Pursuit is one of the best arcade racers of all time - pure, unadulterated bliss in game form.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Portal 2	205	95%
 Another exceptional realisation from Valve, gamers are going to be talking about Portal 2 for a long time to come.		
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%

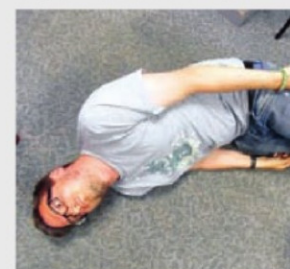
game	issue	score
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
 Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
 With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, Resistance 2 is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
 With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
 Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for Colin McRae. Not much in it, really.		
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
Singstar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Soul Calibur IV	169	94%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
 Just beating Blur to the chequered flag, Split/Second is a wonderfully intense racing game in the Burnout mould.		

*denotes import review

PLAY'S DIARY



DAY 9: Spurred on by the realisation he has legs, Chris demands the Play team learn how to dance. While the Scouse one feels this will bring people together and make us one glorious whole, it does little more than fracture an already-fragile set of relationships.



DAY 14: Fortunately Ian is at hand to set things right, and in a matter of days he has brought a sense of camaraderie back, as well as MAD SKILLS. The Krunkle Kick, for example, he introduces via the wonder that is Tim and Eric.



DAY 25: At this point Jon has been sat there for 25 days, glaring at everyone. At one point he is rumoured to have said, "stop dancing you insolent little prats - there's a magazine to make," but we can't be sure of that.



DAY 29: And Ryan? Well, Ryan always dances. Even when he looks perfectly still, he's always dancing. And it's the same for this month, too. You think you see some twitching? That's him outdancing you more than you've ever been outdanced before, sucka.

Wasps vs Absolutely anything



WASPS

THESE FOUL LITTLE creatures could be used by anyone wanting to prove that there is, indeed, no God. What kind of creator would *choose* to make something as foul and hellish as these flying shits of the world? There you are sitting around trying to enjoy your life as much as you can, when all of a sudden this little yellow and black *prick* flies over and starts messing about with your drink. You get annoyed, naturally, so you try to make it go away through the logic of 'I am massive, you are tiny'. Unfortunately, somewhere along the lines it was decided these little winged spawn of Satan should have the ability to hurt humans. And hurt them they do. And bully them they do. And make them nervous they do. Wasps are awful and are the only things in the world, ever, we would welcome a genocide of.

Wouldn't care if they went extinct/10

ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING (YES, EVEN THAT)

ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING

STUBBING YOUR TOE? Better than wasps. Being late for something you didn't want to be late for? Better than wasps. Bees? Better than wasps. Gambling away your entire savings in the space of 20 minutes? Better than wasps. Being homeless, destitute and diseased? Better than wasps. Being fired out of a cannon into the sun? Better than wasps. Crimes against humanity? Better than wasps. Having your limbs removed and replaced with hunks of rotting gammon, all while surrounded by a pack of hungry wolves? Better than wasps. Being forced to choose which of the two people you love most dearly in the world should die, and having to pull the trigger yourself? Better than wasps. Xbox 360? Alright, wasps aren't *that* bad.

Better than wasps/10

game	issue	score
Sports Champions	196	83%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.		
Tekken 6	184	94%
There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, <i>nothing</i> , stops <i>Tekken 6</i> from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.		
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
This proves once and for all that Western RPGs are better than Japanese ones! Sort of. Whatever, <i>Oblivion</i> is an awesome game.		
The Fight	199	42%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The Orange Box	161	93%
Five brilliant games for the price of one, what on Earth could be better than that? Nothing, that's what. <i>Absolutely nothing</i> .		
The Saboteur	187	67%
The Shoot	199	76%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
<i>Undisputed</i> is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages.		
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%

game	issue	score
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
<i>Among Thieves</i> has proven itself to be a real work of class. It's one of the best games in recent years.		
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
A brilliant surprise from the developer of <i>Bayonetta</i> and easily one of the best games we've played in 2010.		
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%

PS STORE LISTING

1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.		
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blokus	202	54%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bombberman Ultra	185	82%
Braid	188	93%
We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for <i>Braid</i> . Simply brilliant.		
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
It doesn't have <i>MW2</i> 's polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.		

game	issue	score
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Catan	195	85%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	168	70%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer Red Alert 3 Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.		
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Driver	171	90%
With the most cinematic car chases ever seen in a game, <i>Driver</i> made a huge impact in 1998. Despite rosey graphics, it's still a playable title.		
Droplitz	184	91%
<i>Droplitz</i> is a superb puzzler that blends <i>Rez</i> -style layers of music, pipes and dials to create one of the most satisfying puzzlers in years.		
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome II	202	83%
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	170	45%
Explodemon	203	70%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.		
Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.		
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
A truly engaging RPG - if you've never experienced the game before then make sure this is the next thing you download.		
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Never gets the love it deserves, but this PSN release gives you the chance to experience Square Enix's refreshing RPG all over again.		
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
f!Ow	151	90%
Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. <i>f!Ow</i> is an innovative title available on the Network.		
Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%

game	issue	score
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperballoid HD	188	70%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Simply put, <i>Joe Danger</i> is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
Lara is back to her best in <i>The Guardian Of Light</i> . <i>Tomb Raider</i> fans will love it and for just £9.99 everyone else should, too.		
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
This game has an astonishing amount to offer if you're prepared to plunge into its murky depths.		
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition	195	94%
The HD remake of arguably the best game in the <i>Monkey Island</i> series is a more than welcome addition to the PSN.		
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Bold, bright, insanely addictive – this re-imagining of the retro classic is an essential addition to anybody's PSN library.		
Pain	183	69%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Peggle	189	94%
So addictive it should come with some sort of government warning. Terrific value for money and a superb little puzzle game.		
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
The second game in the <i>PixelJunk</i> series is great fun and brilliantly addictive. Buy it and play it constantly for hours on end!		
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%

game	issue	score
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
Simply put, <i>Joe Danger</i> is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Clever, funny and taxing in all the right ways, we're very happy that the Freelance Police are on PlayStation 3.		
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue.		
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
Section 8	193	78%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic 4: Episode One	199	82%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Telltale Games' excellent modern addition to the <i>Monkey Island</i> franchise finally sees the light of day on PSN. Go pick it up.		
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%
The Last Guy	171	91%
<i>Slope</i> meets <i>Pac-Man</i> meets GoogleMaps. <i>The Last Guy</i> is yet another innovative and compelling addition to the PSN's line-up.		
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	195	92%
LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.		
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%

game	issue	score
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
WipEout	01	89%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
There's a reason <i>Worms</i> is still going strong, and that's because people never get tired of its fun personality and addictive gameplay.		
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yar's Revenge	206	57%
Zuma	182	78%

PSP mini LISTING

A Space Shooter For Two Bucks	202	55%
Alien Havoc	186	68%
Angry Birds	202	93%
Flinging birds at stuff for four times the price of the original in a less-functional fashion than before has never been so much fun.		
Bloons	186	65%
Brainpipe	186	70%
BreakQuest	186	45%
Edge	202	85%
Field Runners	186	85%
Fortix	186	57%
Funky Punch	186	49%
Hero Of Sparta	186	57%
I Must Run!	202	70%
Kahoots	186	88%
NOVA: Near Orbit Vanguard Alliance	202	63%
Pinball Fantasies	186	90%
<i>Pinball Fantasies</i> was originally released on the Amiga and features four tables and some excellent pinball gaming.		
Puzzle Scape	186	75%
Sky Force	202	68%
Tetris	186	93%
How it is possible to make Tetris feel so fresh and so much fun again we don't know, but it's managed here.		
Vampire	186	67%
Who's That Flying?!	202	64%

PSP LISTING

300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bombberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%

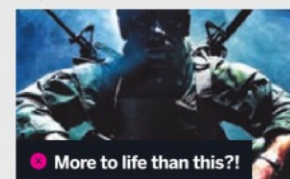
PAUSE TO CONSIDER...

THE PSN DOWNTIME

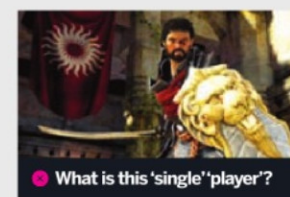
REMEMBER THOSE DAYS when the PSN wasn't working? When it had been hacked to hell and we were all left floating and listless, without a single online brawl to keep us ticking over? It seems like so long ago now, and we're definitely not writing this for a future issue while the network is actually still down, no siree...



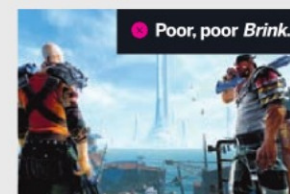
But the PSN downtime wasn't actually as bad a thing as the loud part of the internet would have you believe. While they all shouted about the fact they couldn't sit on *Black Ops* for 42 hours solid, it was us – and we'd hope you – that took advantage of the quiet time to experience *other* delights.



We remembered a whole world of single player treats; we remembered the stack of unplayed games clogging up our respective gaming rooms; we didn't just sit on a mindless, repeating loop of killing StashMan69LOL for hours – we progressed in the things we'd promised we would progress in at some point. Well, that or we just played on the Xbox 360.



So when you think back to the gigantic disaster of 2011 that nearly killed us all, try to remember it wasn't actually such a bad thing – it was a good thing. Yes, you were a bit bored and annoyed and scared that your entire identity had been stolen by some rogue 14-year-old hacking goit – but it reminded you that *other games exist*.



GARY MCTRUTH'S WORLD OF RECOMMENDATIONS

THIS MONTH: RACKET SPORTS

SEEING AS IT'S now officially summer, I recommend you go outside and frolic like real people – of which I am definitely one – do. Though if you've got hay fever or really bad social skills then you might not want to bother.



So while those poor schmucks are outside being stung by wasps and sweating too much, I can let you in on a little secret – I fooled them! I actually want to tell you the best game to play during those hot summer days.



It's a little ditty called *Racket Sports* – yes, it might seem like it has incorrect spelling, and yes those fools at **Play** only gave it 37%, but what do they know? NOTHING. Mainly because they're not me, and I am awesome.



What happens in the game is you get one of those Moving control devices and swing it – like real tennis, but better because there isn't as much risk of you being beaten up by Tennis Punks. It's really brilliant!



It's like tennis, but better. That's my review, and as you all know you can trust me, you know it's a recommendation you can take to the bank. In fact, you could take out a mortgage on that recommendation.



game	issue	score
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core – Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
An absolute must-have for RPG fans, and one of the best titles available on the PSP. A simply brilliant game.		
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
Bar some combat control issues, <i>GTA: Chinatown Wars</i> has perfectly translated to the PSP. It's a must-have game.		
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Proving Ground	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%

*denotes import review

game	issue	score
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
Refined in certain areas and slightly worse in Create mode but still a fantastic addition to PSP's lineup.		
LocoRoco	143	94%
We called this the definitive PSP title in our review, and it is a game that no PSP owner should be without.		
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
A fantastic entry in the <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> series and one of the best games on PSP. Wonderful.		
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
A proper <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> game on a portable machine. It was never likely to disappoint, and it didn't. A great title.		
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCrois	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Unplugged comes highly recommended. It's superb – there are few better rhythm-action games on the handheld.		

game	issue	score
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Very nearly as good as its PlayStation 3 counterpart. Which is a good thing because that's the best rally game money can buy.		
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
New modes and characters keep things interesting, while fights are as hectic and solid as ever.		
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Fantastic to look at and fast and fluid to play. <i>Tekken 6</i> is the best game of the series on PSP.		
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	66%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipeOut Pulse	159	86%
WipeOut Pure	138	91%
Exceeding all of our expectations as to what a handheld <i>WipeOut</i> game could be. <i>Pure</i> is an essential PSP purchase.		
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%

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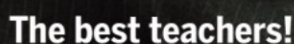
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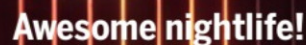
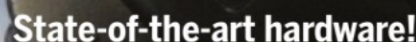


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